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by Maharajshri Akhandananda Saraswati ji

VYAVAHARA SHUDDHI

Purity in Social Interaction

Based on

Yagya, Daan and Tapa in the Gita

And

Anasakti

Translated by Purnima Toolsidas

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Vyavahar Shuddhi

(Part I)

Pravachan I

Yagyadaanatapah karma na tyaajyam kaaryame`va tat,

Yagyo daanam tapashchaiva paavanaani maneeshinaam.

(18. 5)

(The activities of Yagya, daan and tapa should never be given up. They are essential duties, because they purify a wise person.)

Bhagwan described Yagya (ritual offerings through fire worship), *daana* (giving in charity), and *tapa* (asceticism) to Arjuna. He used the word *'maneeshinaam'*. There are many *maneeshi* (wise people), but few of them are *paavana* (having a purifying effect). We see people who are learned, intelligent, and impressive, but hardly any of them have a pure *antahkaran* (fourfold mind, or subtle body).

It is a fact that learning and a good intellect have the capacity to purify the antahkaran. In common parlance, 'manishi' means one who has the ability to control the mind. *Maneeshaa* is the intellect that has the capacity to rule the mind, and a person who has this, is called a 'manishi'. You are so intelligent that you turn your mind towards whichever direction you want, but that does not mean that your antahkaran is pure.

Moha (delusion; attachment) comes and settles in the antahkaran. Moha can be *praakrita* (natural), or *sanskrita* (cultivated; implanted). People have *aham* (ego) and *mamataa* (attachment). They also have *kaama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *pakshapaata* (favoritism), and *krooratаа* (hard-heartedness). All these sully the antahkaran, so the *saadhana* (methods of purification) have to be suitable for their removal.

When we want to remove the stain of grease, we have to use lime or curds. Similarly, different methods are needed to remove the dirt that comes into our heart. A lot of people are extremely clever, but it can hardly be said that they are *poota* (pure-hearted), *pavitra* (purified), or *paavana* (having a purifying effect). How can they be pavitra if they usurp what belongs to others? How can they be pavitra if they cause suffering to some, in order to please another? How can they be pavitra if they humiliate people because of their own vanity or prejudice?

It can safely be stated that people who are highly intelligent have been a far greater cause of suffering than ordinary people. Shri Krishna said, 'Intelligent people! You may be very clever, but your mind is not pure. The fabric of your antahkaran is dirty. I will tell you the methods for cleaning it. The methods are: Yagya, daan, and tapa.'

Let us talk about tapa first. Daan purifies *dravya* (material objects), as well as mamata and moha. Daan is of some external item, but the cleansing is internal. It is an external action that has an internal effect. Wealth is given in daan. The wealth is outside the body, and the action is done by the body. A Yagya is also done by the body, and tapa purifies the body.

Make three divisions – doing tapa purifies the mind and the body. Doing a Yagya purifies actions, and doing daan purifies wealth. The combined purification of all three purifies the antahkaran. The Gita first describes their basic forms by introducing their names. The description of their essence comes later. It is amazing!

When you do a Yagya, three things come into your life. One is that you develop the habit of a life of beneficial routines. You learn when you should get up, bathe, do Sandhya Vandan, and meditate. Your lifestyle becomes disciplined. If the Yagya is an external ritual like fire worship, you have to sit before the *agni* (fire), think about the *de`vtaa* (presiding deity) you propitiate, and offer oblations. You absorb the *pavitra te`ja* (pure brightness) of the fire. Nothing is more purifying than agni; not even *vaayu* (the wind). You know that agni turns coal into diamonds. When you sit before the agni and absorb its heat, you

invite its effulgence into yourself. Cultivate a wish for agni. The meaning of the word 'agni' is – *agre` agre` nayati iti agnih*. That, which makes us go forward, help us to progress, is agni. When you do a Yagya, your life becomes more disciplined, you absorb effulgence, and you give things – you do *pradaana* (give in return).

What is pradaan? When food is cooked, the smoke rises and mixes into the atmosphere. So does the smoke of factories, cars, machines, etc. We soil the air with all kinds of impure substances. The *aasamaana* (sky) is so vast that it is indeed *asamaana* (incomparable to anything else), and yet, we manage to pollute it. The mantras that are spoken when oblations are offered purify the fire and also the atmosphere into which the smoke mingles.

The meaning of the mantras is, 'O Agni Devta, take us on the path that is good. O Vayu Devta, fill our lives with *praana shakti* (the power of life).' What does this mean? It means that we are apologizing to the sky for having dirtied it by using foul language and unclean smoke; we are trying to make amends by using pure mantras and offering purifying oblations. A Yagya is done to atone for all the dirty things we use fire to destroy.

When we purify all space by doing a Yagya, we unknowingly benefit all creation. We unconsciously render a service to the whole world. These good deeds are a side-effect of the Yagya we do.

Tapa means restraining the mind and senses. Our senses pull us wherever they want. They are unrestrained. The ears absorb all kinds of sounds, the eyes see whatever comes before them, the nose smells whatever smells rise, and the tongue tastes whatever attracts it. The skin touches whatever it feels like touching. No framework of decorum restricts the senses.

These days, people bring up a new argument. 'What is the use of controlling the senses if the mind is uncontrolled?' This is not a proper argument. The senses have to be controlled before the mind can be controlled. Control of the mind is the fruit, and controlling the senses is the *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress). You will obtain the *saadhya* (goal) only after doing the sadhana. If you say that you will control your senses only after you have controlled your mind, neither your mind nor your senses will ever be controlled.

Sadhana begins from what your present condition is. *'Bhoomau patati paadaanaam bhoomire`va param balam'* – a person has to take the support of the very ground on which he falls, to rise up again.

Therefore, when a person is attached to material possessions, luxuries and sensual indulgences, or accumulation, his sadhana should begin with these. He should use discretion to decide which wealth is proper for him to take and which isn't. And, he should understand what is the method for purifying the wealth he has, the method for purifying the senses he indulges, and the body he uses for his many activities. The methods of *shodhan* (purification) are not whimsical – they have to be followed systematically.

Let us consider tapa. 'Ta' is the sixteenth and 'pa' is the twenty first letter in the Nagari alphabet. Tapa is considered to be the main sadhana for purifying the antahkaran. It is stated that we must lead the right kind of life, even at the cost of some personal hardships. The Gita tells us that there are three kinds of tapa – the tapa of the body, the tapa of speech, and the tapa of the mind. The tapa of the *vaanee* (speech) is the easiest of the three. That means, we should mentally prepare how to convey what we wish to express, before we speak. Speaking impulsively leads to regret. Do you eat rice that is soft and well-cooked, or do you eat uncooked rice? What you say should be soft and palatable. Whenever you want to say something, give some thought to whether it will purify your antahkaran or not. Speech is the instrument that carries things from outside into the antahkaran. When we see, eat, or think of something, it appears in our mind later on. Where is the memory kept? It is housed in our antahkaran.

Once, I said something strongly to someone. Later, I felt very sorry that I had spoken harshly. Had I practiced asceticism of speech at that moment, I would have tempered my words, and been saved from the remorse. I suffered because I had spoken impulsively. My hasty words created suffering for me and for the other person.

Thus, the meaning of *tapasyaa* (asceticism) is to give proper consideration to what we say. Our words may not be recorded in any diary or register, but they are recorded in our antahkaran, and we have to bear the sukha-dukha for them later on. The Gita has mentioned the tapa of the vani first.

Anudve`gakaram vaakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat,

Svaadhyaayaabhyaasanam chaiva vaangmaya tapa uchyate`.

(17. 15)

(Speech that does not cause agitation, is pleasant to hear, and is

beneficial, is the right kind of speech. Chanting the names of the Parameshwara and reciting passages from the Vedas and Shastras, is called the tapa of the vani.)

To speak with the tongue is the easiest thing to do. Physical work and mind-control are much harder. Great manishis speak at length, but they talk as though spewing venom. They shoot verbal arrows that pierce the heart of the other person. When people speak maliciously or hurtfully, pouring out all their pent up anger, it shows that they lack tapa of the vani. They do not purify their speech before speaking. Their words sully their own heart and the hearts of others. *Ashuddha vaanee* (impure speech) increases the progeny of impurity, so learn the right way to speak before saying anything. People say, 'I have a tongue and I will say whatever I feel like saying.' Such an attitude will not help you to develop your intellect or your life in the right way.

In our village, it is said, *'Panditaayin, shubha bolo* – O wife of a Pundit, speak auspiciously.' This applies to everyone. Speech should be such that it does not become a thorn in anyone's heart. It should not cause anger or agitation. Ill-considered words that inflict pain and create misunderstandings are not the right kind of speech.

The auspicious beginning for making your antahkaran pure is to avoid saying anything hurtful. Restrained speech is the asceticism of speech, so control yourself when you talk. One Mahatma told me, 'If you want to tell someone something, repeat it thrice in your own mind before saying it. Never speak hastily.'

The next point in the tapa of speech is to speak the truth. Along with this it is said that it is not always necessary that you speak. Keeping silent about some things is also Dharma. In certain circumstances it is Dharma to speak the truth, and in certain circumstances, it is Dharma to remain silent. It is not proper to declare, 'I know this is true, so I will say it.' We have to bear in mind the consequences of what we say, how we say it, when we say it, and in whose presence. The Upanishads say, *'Satye`na labdhasya tapasaa e`va aatmaa.'* But in the opinion of Shankaracharyaji Maharaj, it is not that a person obtains the Atma only by speaking the truth.

Then what is the right thing to do?

The Atma is obtained by giving up *asatya* – that which is not the truth. Shankaracharyaji has interpreted the word '*satye`na*' as meaning, 'give up all falsehood, but speak only when it is necessary to speak.'

There was a man whose unmarried daughter became pregnant. He was walking on the road when another man called out to him. 'O Punditji!'

'Yes, my brother, what is it?'

'Do you know that your unmarried daughter is pregnant?'

The man spoke the truth, but it was not proper to embarrass the man in public. Thus, when people say things unthinkingly, it is not the right thing to do. Truth spoken without discrimination is harmful. Satya is desirable, but it should be accompanied with discrimination. One should speak the truth with discrimination, speak in a way that is pleasing, and in a way that benefits the person to whom you speak. What you say should be *avasarochita* (appropriate to the occasion) and you should speak only when you need to speak.

Manuji says –

Satyam brooyaat priyam brooyaat, na brooyaat satyamapriyam,

Priyam cha naanritam brooyaat sa e`va dharmah sanaatanah.

That means, speak the Satya, but speak priya (that which is welcome); speak priya, but speak only Satya. Avoid pleasant lies, and unpleasant truths. This is the Sanatana (eternal) Dharma (right behavior).

Dharma is not rigid like a plank of wood; it is flexible. That is why Shri Krishna says, *'Anudve`gakaram vaakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat'* – you should speak the truth in a manner that makes it appealing and beneficial. You should not say anything that provokes a quarrel.

There is a very good book on Ayur Veda that was discovered in Nepal some fifty or one hundred years ago. It is called 'Kashyap Samhita', like 'Charak Samhita'. It describes how we should speak. *'Avisanvaadi-pe`shalam'*, meaning, your speech should have clarity, but it should not contain anything that can lead to a dispute. A person who avoids argumentative speech retains good health. Talk that results in arguments gives rise to a number of health problems, according to the Kashyap Samhita.

The tapa of the Gita is not the *panchaagni tapa.* The Gita does not tell

you to endure extreme heat by sitting in the midst of five fires or eighty four fires, or fast, and undertake other physical discomforts. The Gita's tapa is the habit of studying the Shastras. *Svaadhyaaya* – study your Self, your essence. When you spend your time studying other people, it is not tapa! It is not tapa to study the family history of Indian Princely families or the British Royalty. You should study the heart, the *praana* (life spirit), and the mind. You should examine the desires in your mind, and decide which ones should be fulfilled and which ones are improper. You have to learn how to think about the *vastu* (the true object; the Brahman), the Satya. You have to ponder on the essence of your Aham ('I'). Studying these is called 'svadhyay'. This is what you should practice.

Abhyaasa (study, practice) means svadhyay. To examine in depth, examine repeatedly, and understand your Self, is the tapa of the *sookshma vaanee* (subtle speech; thoughts) It is a purifying asceticism. If you speak untruths your antahkaran will become impure. If you say things that create agitation, talk harshly and hurtfully, how can your antahkaran remain pure? Your speech must have clarity. You should not talk in a way that leaves scope for changing your stand later on. Ambiguous speech is a fault, and so is unnecessary, excessive chatter. Avoiding these is an asceticism of speech. It is a tapa that purifies your antahkaran.

De`vadvijagurupraagyapoojanam shauchamaarjavam,

Brahmacharyamahinsaa cha shaariram tapa uchyate`.

(17. 14)

(Worship of the Devtas, Brahmins, Gurus, and learned people, maintaining purity of mind and body, being straightforward, controlling lust, and practicing non-violence, is the tapa of the body.)

The Tapa of the body is described here. This includes respect for others. You worship the *de`vtaa* (demigods, presiding deities), *dvija* (Brahmins), *praagya* (the learned and wise), and the Guru. The dvija are superior by birth. The pragya are superior by learning and wisdom. The *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions) of the Brahmins are loftier than yours. The Devtas are Chandra (the moon), Surya (the sun), Agni (fire), Vayu (wind), and many others. Our Sadguru (Guru established in the Sat) should also be worshipped and

revered. This is asceticism of the body.

Another tapa of the body is to keep it *pavitra* (clean and pure). In this, you have to control your urge to obtain the pleasures of touch. The Devta, dvija, Guru and pragya are all outside your body. You have to make an effort to remove the impurities of your body. Your clothes should be pavitra, your food should be pavitra, and the floor on which you sit should be pavitra. You should also know what is touchable and what is not to be touched. This is called the feeling of *sprishya* (touchable) and *asprishya* (untouchable). *Asprishyataa* (the feeling of untouchablity) should not be confused with *ghrinaa* (disgust; revulsion).

I remember that when I was a child, I was forbidden to touch my mother till the fourth day of her monthly cycle. My mother would sleep in a separate room, on a blanket, and have her meals separately. She would not appear before anyone, and we were not allowed to go to her. Does that mean we felt revulsion for her? Can anyone think that I felt disgust for my mother, sister, or daughter? Politicians create rifts to increase their vote bank. We wash our hands when we touch certain parts of our own body. Can anyone think that we are repelled by our own nose, eyes, or mouth? When a person avoids touching someone or something for the sake of purity or self-restraint, that is neither disgust not hatred. It is a kind of decorum, a kind of tapasya.

A gentleman came one day. I asked him if he would cook rotis for me. He stood with folded hands. 'Will you eat rotis cooked by me?' he asked. One day I met a childhood acquaintance. He stood in a corner, trying to avoid me. 'What is the matter, my brother?' I asked. 'I am not in a fit condition to touch you,' he said. He had been drinking. What is this bundle of flesh and bones we all walk around with? The Yoga Darshan has an excellent sentence – *Shauchaatsvaanga-jugupsaa parairasansargah (2. 40)*. When we see how impure our body is, the feeling comes, 'I am not fit to touch the Devta. I will not do puja till I have had a bath. Only after that will I do puja and touch my Gurudev.'

The wish to keep our body, speech, and mind pure has left us. We want others to be pure, but fail to observe our own lack of purity. Don't we become *apavitra* (impure) when we cheat, steal, or deceive? We have forgotten our own impurities. It is tapasya to keep ourselves pure. You should think about your purity-impurity – this is *aadhyaatmik* (metaphysical) sadhana.

One of the most important thing in life is that a person should be honest and straightforward. People who have inflated egos tend to be

devious and crafty. There can be no greater impurity than to have one thing in mind and say something else. It is a major impurity when a person's intentions are contrary to his actions. The tapasya is that your speech, mind, and actions all reveal the same thing.

Practice the rules of brahmacharya (chastity) according to your Ashram (stage of life). People don't know the rules of brahmacharya for a grihastha (married householder). Hardly anyone studies the rules given in the Vedas. People don't even think about their own lifestyle. The purpose of marriage is not destructive overindulgence; it is to protect a woman from other men. There are rules for conjugality for married people. Conjugal relationships are forbidden on certain dates like the *amaavasyaa* (no moon), *poornimaa* (full moon), *e`kaadashi* (the eleventh day of the lunar calendar), *grahan* (eclipse), Janamashtami (the birthday of Shri Krishna), etc.

Marriage is not a license for excesses. It is meant to restrict indulgences. When a married man practices restraints as per the rules of his Ashram, his brahmacharya remains intact. But when a grihastha ignores the rules and indulges indiscriminately, he falls in his tapasya. He loses the purity of his antahkaran.

You may do tapa. Study the Shastras, or give away all you have, but unless your motives are pure, it will all be wrongdoing. So, make a resolve to avoid doing anything wrong, or hurting anyone. This is the easiest tapasya for a *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body).

Manahprasaadah saumaytvam maunamaatmavinigrahah,

Bhaavasanshuddhiritye`tat tapo maanasamuchyate`.

(17. 16)

(The mind should be happy and at peace. Thinking about Bhagwan should become a natural habit, and your feelings should be pure. These are called the tapa of the mind.)

Your mind should be limpid, free of crookedness or bad intentions. You should always be smiling mentally – *manahprasaadah.* Spread joy, like the moon does, and speak only when you need to speak. Don't waste words. Keep your senses restrained and your feelings pure. This is called *maanasa-tapasyaa* – the asceticism of speech. The tapasya of

the body, speech and mind are the three forms of asceticism. They bestow good fortune, whether practiced by wise men or fools. A fool will become wise, and his antahkaran will be purified. If a person's mind is pure, and he is intelligent, his intellect will never misguide him.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan II

Yagyaarthaatkarmanonyatra lokoyam karmabandhanah,

(3. 9)

(People get bound by their karmas when they work without having the feeling of working for universal good.)

The Gita says that if you have the feeling of doing a Yagya (ritual for the good of all) when you do your work, you will get Mukti (liberation from rebirth), but if you don't have this attitude, your work will bind you to suffering and rebirth.

I want to tell you two things about karma (actions/rituals). It is not proper to quote a shloka to forbid or affirm something. The fact is that we should think with the outlook of a Rishi (Sage).

Some people are utterly useless. They are too lazy to do anything. This is called being *akarmanya*. People who make no effort can never have *purushaartha* (human achievements), because they are trapped in Tamo guna (the lowly tendency that binds with sloth and delusion). They achieve none of the four purusharthas; no Dharma, no Artha (material success), no Kama (fulfillment of desires) and no Moksha (liberation from rebirth). They will never have inner satisfaction.

Manuji says that we should strive to do the things that give inner satisfaction, and never do anything that gives *aatmaglaani* (shame, self-disgust).

Yatkarma kurvantosya syaat paritoshontaraatmanah,

Tatprayatne`na kurveeta vipareetam tu varjaye`t.

A man who is in the grip of indolence and delusion has no purushartha in his life. The presence of purushartha is established by the fact that nobody can live in complete idleness. How long much can you sleep? How long will you remain in the grip of laziness and mental stupor? 'O men of bright intellect! Get up! Wake up! Invoke the brightness of fire in your life.'

When we enter the area of activity, we are faced by two kinds of karma – the *vihit* (instituted) and the *nishiddha* (forbidden). If you are told that you should not do something, pause and give the matter some thought. Don't react aggressively and go ahead unthinkingly. It is prudent and polite to give some thought as to why you are being told not to do what you wanted. When ego drives you into obstinacy, you get bound to the action.

Vihit actions are of two types. Even when you do what the Shastras condone, you should see whether the action is prompted by an urge to do what is right and good, or whether it is prompted by an urge to satisfy a selfish desire. When you have risen above laziness and inactivity, the next step is to use discrimination and understand what prompts your actions.

Mental inclinations are often the cause for your being mislead and cheated. The mind is filled with *vaasanaa* (avid desires). Some of the dormant tendencies come from parents, grandparents and ancestors of both sides; some come from what you see in society, and some from the impressions of past births. Of these, some are good and some are bad. If we work indiscriminately, nobody can predict where our actions will lead us. That is why actions should be controlled by *anushaasana* (the constitution; laws; rules), not by desire.

Regarding the anushasana, you have to see who the *anushaastaa* (ruler) is. Who is making the rules? It is necessary to give thought to the framework of rules by which we are governed. Is it the *shaashvat drishti* (the vision of eternity), or *shudra drishti* (lowly outlook)? When you limit yourself to the good of the village at the cost of the district, your view is lowly. When you limit yourself to the good of your district at the cost of the State, your view is lowly. The elevated outlook is that which connects your life to *poornataa* (the totality). It is a lowly outlook when people want the benefit of their own country at the cost of other countries and humanity. A lowly outlook will prevent you from rising above petty considerations. Weigh your set of values, and see what kind of an outlook you are ruled by.

Some forty or forty-five amendments have been made in our constitution within a few years. Why was that necessary? It is because the laws made for the immediate circumstances are of a different category than the laws made for the eternal benefit of all society. If the outlook keeps the *moola tattva* (basic essence) in mind, considering the good of all, it is the right constitution.

The rule that lacks vision, and is narrow minded, has to be amended. If we work according to the true rules, it becomes the Dharma that gives *abhyudaya* (upliftment) and *nishre`yas* (salvation) – *'Yatobhyudayanishre`yasansiddhih sa dharmah.'*

What is the characteristic of Dharma? Dharma is that, which enables us to stop our feet from going to the wrong place, stop our hands from doing what we shouldn't, and stop the mind from wrong desires. That anushasana is called the rule of Dharma. Dharma is eternal

righteousness. It is not restricted to any particular place. You cannot say that Dharma was born in India or Europe or America. You cannot say that it was born five hundred of five thousand or five hundred thousand years ago. The characteristic of Dharma is that it makes us capable of controlling our mind and senses. *Dhaaranaad dharmah'* – that, which sustains, is Dharma.

See whether the vehicle of your life has good brakes or not. Do you possess self-control? It is important to have the strength of mind to stop yourself from doing anything you shouldn't. You should be able to control your sense organs, and order them to do – or refrain from doing – what should or should not be done. Of what use is the vehicle that carries us into a ditch even if we keep applying the brakes?

The meaning of *vihit karma* (instituted actions) is a life of self-restraint. If you lack self-control, you cannot earn Dharma; nor can you retain the capacity for indulgence for long. There is no question of obtaining Moksha! The Gita says that the power of *samyam* (self-control) in life is a Yagya – *'Aatmasamyam yogaagnau juhvati gnaanadeepite` (4. 27)'*. The rule of *aatmasamyam* (self-control) is eternal. You should adhere to its rule.

The next point is, even if your actions are in keeping with the proper rules, are they *sakaama* (with selfish desires) or *nishkaama* (with no selfish desires)?

The first step was removing sloth and indolence. The next step was to instill self-restraint and bring discipline into your life; to do what should be done and not do what should not be done. How was this achieved? By bringing in the constitution of right behavior.

The Gita now separates the selfish desires from the unselfish desires that prompt your actions. Do you work for your own gain and comfort, or do you work for the good of society? The motives that drive your actions have to be understood, if you want to understand what Yagya is. This understanding cannot be procured from books; to obtain it, your antahkaran must have *vive`ka* (discrimination) and profound thought. In the words of Bharavi, *'Vrinute` hi vimrishyakaarinam gunalabdhaah svayame`va sampadah'* – when a person gives due consideration before doing anything, wealth is charmed by his good qualities and comes to serve him.

So, what is your *svaartha* (self-interest) like? Svartha is not limited to your own person; it can be for the family, community, sect, etc. These selfish attitudes are, in some parts, according to Dharma and in some

parts they spoil Dharma. *Jaati* (caste) was created for the purpose of maintaining certain decorum in the lifestyle of a group of people. The jaati created by Bhagwan is of a different kind. In Nature, jaati means species, like a horse, cow, donkey, elephant, etc in animals. Birds and plants also have jaati. In humans there are the Varnas (classes), like the Brahmins, Kshtriyas (warrior class), Vaishyas (traders and farmers) and Shudras (laborers).

We should examine our mind and see who we hope to benefit by the sakama work we do. Do we want to benefit our religious sect, caste, or village? Is the benefit for ten or twenty years duration, or more, or less? All these should be carefully examined. Are your actions your own, or are they reactions what others say and do? Are they driven by greed or fear? It is not enough to say glibly that you have no selfish desires. It is ironic that people who claim to be free of desire continue to have a baby each year, year after year!

So, first let Dharma come into your shop, your home, and your thinking. *Nishkaamataa* (lack of selfishness) has to be genuine and authentic. People who tell lies, cheat and harm others are not unselfish. If they claim to have no selfish interest, they are bluffing you. Suppose you tell someone, 'If you want to work for me, you will have to work with a *nishkaama bhaava*. You will have to work twelve hours a day, take the lowest salary, and put in maximum effort', that will be a selfish outlook on your part. Such people want to get maximum output at minimal wages. May Bhagwan grant *sadbuddhi* (right thinking) to such selfish people. The right and proper thing to do is to pay what is fair, even if you employ someone for some charitable work. Never compel anyone to work for free. Don't say, 'I am giving voluntary service – you should also work for free, because it is for a good cause.' A man must get his due, even if it is for contributing for some social benefits.

There are different types of *nishkaamataa* (unselfish attitudes) in work. The first is to consider that you are only doing your duty, and not a favor to anyone. If this is not possible, have a feeling that you are working for the good of all, and have no expectations of any form of reward or return for what you do. You should think, 'My antahkaran is purified when I work with the thought that I am merely doing my duty.' The fact is that work is a method of cleansing. Just as we wash away the dirt on our body or clothes, we purify our antahkaran through nishkama work.

Quite often, the work is prompted by our *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions). This turns into an impurity. In our

Shastras, the head of the boy is shaved completely during the ritual of the *mundan* sanskara. This is around the age of one or two years. When the ritual of the Yagyopaveeta sanskara (the sacred thread ceremony) is done, the head is shaved, but a small tuft of hair – called the 'choti' – is left at the crown of the head of the boy. What is this? This is our *sanskriti* – culture or tradition. After this ritual, a boy is told what he should and should not eat and do, to uphold the prestige of his sanskriti.

However, does this sanskriti last all life long? No; the boy will take Sanyas one day. That day, his sacred thread and choti will be removed. He will have to follow the rules of *nivritti* (withdrawing from worldly considerations) Dharma. This is also our sanskriti. Our sanskriti first protects us from eating and doing what is forbidden, and then it removes the bondage of duties and right activities. There will be no more of whimsical, wayward behavior. The *abhyaasa* (habits) will be perfect.

This sanskriti is one way of removing the *vikriti* (distortions; wrong tendencies), and there is the method of removing the impurities that creep into our cultural traditions. Sanskriti does not mean something that has been practiced for a few hundred or thousand years. Sanskriti is what is done to remove the impurities of our antahkaran.

Don't women apply cream and powder and lipstick? This is also a *sanskaara* (process of beautification). Yet, later they wash it all away, because otherwise it will turn into dirt. Sanskriti is meant to beautify our lives and reveal the *che`tanaa* (consciousness) in us. It is not meant to be held on to unthinkingly. Culture should not become *jada* (insensate). It is meant to destroy distortions and purify our antahkaran.

What is the *shuddhi* (purification) of the antahkaran? When do you call something pure? I asked someone to get me a glass of *shuddha jala* (pure water). He asked if he should add some sugar to it. I said 'No'. Then he asked if he should add some lime and salt! How can water be pure if any other substance is added to it? Similarly, anything that is pure has nothing else mixed in it. Shuddha means that nothing foreign is added to it. When we have any desire, the object of our desire comes into our antahkaran. It may be a man or a woman, wealth, food, position, or even an enemy. *Kaama* (desire) brings another person into the mind. *Lobha* (greed) brings wealth into the mind, and *krodha* (anger) brings the enemy into the mind. Desire, greed and anger are all *vikaara* – they are mental distortions. If a person has a lot of *moha* (attachment to the point of delusion) he thinks constantly

about his family. *Antahkaran shuddhi* (the purification of the antahkaran) means that the forms of external objects do not invade our thinking.

There are two methods for achieving this – one is *saalamba* (with a support) and the other is *niraalamba* (with no support). If a man gets married, it is a sanskara that prevents his mind from wandering to other women. With regard to wealth, you have to make the *maryaadaa* (ethical framework) that you will only earn by means that have the sanction of the Shastras. That is a sanskara. All that we acquire – wealth, learning, power, etc, will be according to Dharma. That will be a maryada.

What is maryada? That, which a person accepts as right, is maryada. What happens when maryada comes into your life? It separates your sukha, wealth and possessions from other people's and makes you refrain from taking them. Why do we follow maryada? We accept maryada in our lives to destroy the distortion of evaluating everything by worldly standards. Sanskaras destroy our vikaras, but they get embedded in our mind, and have to be removed. When both sanskaras and vikaras are removed, the mind becomes pure. To make the mind absolutely pure, the person should have a *kartavya buddhi* – he should think that all he does is merely his duty, as we render service to our parents.

When a mother takes care of her baby, there is no desire of any kind in her. She loves her baby; he is hers, and it is her duty to take care of him. Work done in the spirit of doing your duty is *se`vaa yagya* (the Yagya of rendering service). When a man implants his seed in his wife's womb with the feeling that he is doing his duty, it is a Yagya. The Chandogya Upanishad elaborates in this. It explains what is the Yagya-kund (where the sacred fire is lit), what is the agni, what is the *sruvaa* (ladle for pouring oblations), and who is the *yajamaana* (sponsor).

When a mother bears her baby in her womb for nine months, she is doing a Yagya. It is a Yagya when she suckles her baby. Drinking the mother's milk creates a bond that cannot be created if cow's milk, goat's milk or powdered milk is given to the baby. So, when the mother offers the oblation of her milk into the mouth of her baby, it is a Yagya. The mother does this as a duty, for the good of her child. In the same way, a son renders service to his parents without any selfish desire, because that is his duty. This becomes a cause of the antahkaran becoming pure.

The second point is to observe the purpose behind the actions of a person. Does the man think, 'Bhagwan, who is the Atma of all, will be pleased with what I am doing?' When oblations are poured in the sacred fire, the fragrance spreads all around. Nobody does a Yagya with the thought that the fragrance should come only to his nose! In the same way, all your actions should be done with the feeling that it will please the Paramatma who is the Atma of all. Keep the earth clean – that is a Yagya. Don't pollute the waters; arrange for their purification – that is a Yagya. Try to purify the air that is polluted by the smoke of cars, machines and cooking. The Vedas have many mantras for purifying the atmosphere. 'May the *prithivee* (earth) be shuddha, may jala be shuddha, and may the *aakaasha* (sky) be shuddha.' Bhagwan is *vishvaatmaa* – the Atma of the Vishwa (world). He is the Atma of all Creation, the sensate and also the insensate. He is in all moving and unmoving objects. Whatever is done to please Him is Yagya.

Now see the third point. Work done with the intention of obtaining true Gnan also purifies the antahkaran. *Jigyaasaa* (a desire to know the truth) is also a Yagya. People have different opinions on this. Jigyasa cannot be created unless there are different opinions and people want to know which one is the correct. If everyone were to have the same opinion, *vive`ka* (the power to discriminate) would never develop. If a calculator does all your calculations, you will lose the habit of counting. If someone asks you the total of two and three, you will have to press on the buttons to reply that they make five! Therefore, conflicting opinions and philosophies are given to encourage people to develop their ability to reason and discriminate. A *jigyaasu* (one who seeks to know) has to give thought to the different schools of thought, like the Dvaita, Advaita, Dvaita-Vishishta-Advaita, Advaita-Vishishta-Dvaita, or Dvaitadvaita. Various philosophies are placed before immature people, in order to awaken their powers of discrimination, so that they can ultimately rise above the limitations of opinions and know the *amrita padaartha* (the undying object, the Atma, the Brahman).

You see, if a *sampradaaya* (religious sect) is helpful in taking you to a level that is beyond the limitations of sects, it is a good thing. Otherwise, it binds and constricts you, and that is absolutely wrong. If the jaati helps you to merge with humanity and the Ishwara, it is right; but if it isolates and divides humanity, creating friction and strife, it is absolutely wrong.

When we do something that awakens a desire to know the Satya, that becomes Dharma. Such karmas become Yagyas. Work done as a duty,

done to purify the antahkaran, serve the Paramatma, free yourself from the bondage of karma, awaken a desire to obtain Gnan, and to obtain Gnan, are all considered to be *anushthaana* (specific rituals) for obtaining the Brahman.

Yagya is not done only at a Yagya-shala, where fire worships are held. Once the Bhagwan in the Mandir told me, 'Take Me out of the Mandir and awaken Me in all hearts.' Similarly, the Dharma of the Yagya-shala told me, 'I have inhaled a great deal of smoke in Yagya-shalas. Take me into people's homes, now. I want to stay with families, and in the shops, and in the interaction of people. I refuse to remain imprisoned in a Yagya-shala any more!'

Understand the implication of this, my brother. The *jatharaagni* (the fire that digests the food in the stomach) must be fed. If you eat just enough to keep it lit, you are doing a Yagya. Your hand is the *sruvaa* (ladle that offers oblations). You accept the food through your mouth. Thus, the process of eating is also a Yagya. If you eat to remain alive, and want to use your life to serve others, it is a Yagya.

Just as karma is a Yagya, so is *bhoga* (indulgences). Yagya can be done through bhoga. Gnan is also a Yagya.

The Gita says –

Shre`yaandravyamayaadyagyaanayagyah parantapa,

Sarvam karmaakhilam paartha gnaane` parisamaaptaye`.

(4. 33)

(O Arjuna, Gnan Yagya is superior to Dravya Yagya, where gross objects are offered up. Ultimately, all karma concludes in Gnan.)

In the same way, bhakti is a Bhava Yagya, where you offer up your love to Bhagwan. The prithvi has drawn up her essence and offered it to the Parameshwara. The essence of the earth is fragrance. The essence of jala is *rasa* (flavor). The essence of wind is touch and the essence of the sky is sound. All these are offered up.

Thus, Karma Yoga is separate, Bhakti Yoga is separate, and Bhava Yoga is also separate. The antahkaran is purified by pure actions, pure

feelings, a pure state, and pure Gnan. The process of making the antahkaran pure is also called Yoga.

Yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktvaatmashuddhaye`,

(5. 11)

(Yogis give up all worldly attachments and work to purify their antahkaran.)

The Gita says that Yogis give up all worldly attachments. All their actions are done to make their antahkaran pure, and to get attached to Bhagwan. Yoga is possible only when we attach ourselves to *poornataa* (the totality that is the Brahman). As soon as we attach ourselves to something that is a part, we are separated from the whole. When our actions are done with the feeling that we are connected to the Paramatma, and He abides in all hearts, and it is He who reveals everything, it purifies our antahkaran.

One thing must be considered – when you work according to the rules of Dharma, are your actions done with *nishkaamataa* (lack of selfish interest), or not? If the answer is 'yes', then the question arises whether you go into a Samadhi or interact in the world. The area of people who go into Samadhi is a separate area. They become *nivritta* (withdrawn from worldly activities). Their Yagya is Yoga Yagya – the Yagya of merging into the Paramatma; and Tapa Yagya – the Yagya of asceticism. However, Yagya doesn't only mean going into a Samadhi.

The Gita says –

Aatmaupamye`na sarvatra samam pashyati yorjuna,

Sukham vaa yadi vaa dukham sa yogee paramo matah.

(6. 32)

A person, who continues to interact in this world, sharing the happiness and sorrows of others, is the Supreme Yogi. However, it is important that those who prefer to come into *vyavahaara* (worldly

interaction) see to it that they do not neglect to fulfill their duties. When someone does the Yagya of *nishkaama karma* (unselfish work) he is certainly doing a Yagya; but is he also carrying out his other duties? If he has *kartaapana* (the ego of being the doer) as he carries out his duties, that is wrong. It is like a bulb that develops the pride of spreading light, forgetting the electricity that lights it up. The bulb is merely an instrument.

Agnaana – lack of Gnan – is at the root of kartapana. It is the ego that makes people feel that they are separate individuals. The feeling of being *bhinna* (separate) and *chhinna* (fragmented) is due to the blows that batter the pride of being the doer. All the blows in the world fall on the *kartaa* (the one who feels he is the doer) and *bhokta* (the one who feels that he experiences). If they did not have the ego of being the karta and bhokta, they would not be hurt.

Eeshvarah sarvabhootaanaam hridde`she`rjuna tishthati,

Bhraamayansarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa.

(18. 61)

(O Arjuna, the Ishwara abides in all beings, using His Maya – power of illusion – to make people act according to their past karmas.)

The fact is that the Parameshwara is the *mahaa* (great) karta, the maha bhokta, and the maha *tyaagee* (one who gives up). A person who keeps this in mind will not be overcome by pride. When a person has the feeling of being the doer of some action, the paapa in the action gets attached to him. The dukha that is the result of paapa comes to him. When punya comes into his actions, he gets sukha. The karta is also the bhokta. Paapa-punya are attached to the bhokta, and *raga-dve`sha* (attachments and aversions) are the *bandhan* (bondages). What are raga-dvesha? To get caught in love for somebody, and to burn with hatred for somebody. These are bondage. Paapa and punya are bondage, followed by the bhoga of sukha-dukha. Sukha-dukha leave *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions) that lead to actions, and actions bind. This is the way the wheel of the world rotates.

The feeling of being the doer is weakened when you take the *sharan* (refuge) of Bhagwan. If you see a lazy man who does no work, and say that he is like this because it is Bhagwan's wish, that is not the right

thinking. The man is lazy and selfish. He enjoys being idle. He thinks only of his own comfort. Bhagwan does no manifest if the ego of being the doer is present.

You see, there is a factor called the *adhikaaree bhe`da* – the difference in the eligibility. If a person is a *nikammaa adhikaaree* – an utterly useless fellow – he is told, '*Kuru karmaiva* – do some work.' When he becomes active, he becomes eligible for Dharma. He is forbidden to do certain things and told to do certain things, and permitted to do certain things. The forbidden actions are called 'nishiddha karma', and the instituted actions are called 'vihit karma'.

Then, when he begins to do the vihit karma that are *sakaama* (with selfish desires) he becomes eligible for doing nishkaama karma (without selfish desires), and work for the good of all. When he works with the attitude of doing his duty, he becomes eligible for the *upade`sha* (teaching) that he should give up the subtle ego of being the karta.

Upadesha is given to shatter the feeling, 'I did the work.' The man is told, *'Tame`va sharanam gachha sarvabhaave`na bhaataya (18. 62)* – O Arjuna, take refuge in that Paramatma with all the feelings you have.' The fact is that everything is done by Bhagwan's existence and greatness, but if you say this to people who work for selfish gain and do wrong things, it will become a misrepresentation of the truth. Bhagwan does not make anyone absolutely useless and idle, or do wrong things. *Vaasanaa* (avid desire) prompts people into doing things they shouldn't. Bhagwan does not prompt sakama karma; selfishness does. Similarly, the subtle pride of being the karta is due to our own foolishness; it is not given by Bhagwan.

The Shastras' teaching depends on the eligibility of the individual. It is a serious mistake to think that everything written in the Shastras applies to all. It would be the height of folly to tell a thief that Bhagwan was responsible for his stealing things! That will take him further away from Bhagwan.

To remove the feeling of doership, think about the actions of the Ishwara; you activities will pale into insignificance in comparison. You will realize that your good work was inspired by Bhagwan, done with His power, at His wish, and by His Grace. Your wrong actions, however, are your own mistake. They are not prompted by Bhagwan. Tulsidasji has said:

Guna tumhaaara samujhahin nija dosaa,

Je`hi saba bhaanti tumhaara bharosaa.

(I understand that all the good qualities in me are Yours, but the faults are all mine. I depend upon You in every way.)

So, don't have pride in you do something good. Understand that you were inspired by Bhagwan. And if you do something wrong, understand that it was your mistake. If you say, 'I am not the karta, the Ishwara is the karta,' it is all right, because this is the feeling of every bhakta. The *sharanaagata* (one who has taken refuge in Bhagwan) says, 'Bhagwan, I have done nothing. Everything has been done by You, so You please deal with whatever happens.'

Yatkritam yatkarishyaami tatsarvam na mayaa kritam,

Tvayaakritam tu falabhuk tvame`va madhusudana.

(All I have done and everything I will do, is Your doing, Madhusudan, not mine. Therefore, the fruits are also Yours.)

In 'Advaita Siddhi', Madhusudan Saraswati says that he is not concerned with the praise or criticism of the book, because he does not consider himself to be its author. To place the credit of doership on the Parameshwara, to see Him as the real doer, and become His sharanagata, is to surrender to Him alone – *'Maame`kam sharanam vraja (18. 66)'* This is the way to shatter our pride.

However, my brother, you are yet to obtain Gnan about the Satya. It is *vishvaasa* (faith) that you believe Bhagwan to be the doer. How can *agnaana* (lack of Gnan) be removed? To remove agnan you have to obtain Tattvagnan – the knowledge abut the essence of the Brahman, and know that the Brahman and the Atma are one. This is how we progress from idleness to the experience of the essence of the non-dual Brahman.

In this, where is the meaning of the word 'Yagya' first introduced? It comes as soon as we rise above the state of idleness and move into the sphere of activity. If you proceed step by step to make your

antahkaran pure, you will be elevated. Else, you will get complaisant after a little progress. You will say that good and bad things are done by all, everybody has desire in their heart, everybody feels that he is the doer, etc. If you get stuck midway in your sadhana, you will not be able to complete the process of upliftment. Sadhana is a chemical process that propels you towards a loftier life. The door to this will be blocked. Therefore, even as you adhere to what is right for your present state, you have to try and rise above all these levels. You have to reach a stage that is beyond all disputes of language, groups, caste, sect, 'mine' and 'yours'. Only the shuddha Brahman remains. The Brahman is as shuddha as our shuddha Atma; in fact, the Atma is the Brahman.

Those who cannot comprehend this order of *adhyaaropa* (superimposition) and *apavaada* (negation of the superimposition) do not understand the meaning of Yagya.

Gatasangasya muktasya gnaanaavasthitache`tasah,

Yagnaayaacharatah karma samagram pravileeyate`.

(4. 23)

(Those whose attachments are destroyed, who no longer identify with their body, are seated constantly in the Gnan of the Paramatma, and whose every action is a worship, are never bound by anything they do.)

A person does not get bound by his actions if he does everything in the spirit of doing a Yagya. For such a person there is no paapa, no punya no Narak (Hell), no Swarga (Heaven), no sukha and no dukha. He does not consider anyone to be a *sansaaree* (of the interactive world), or *parichhinna* (a separate piece of the whole). That is why this is a movement of the Yagya that takes a person from the beginning of karma up to the Brahman.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan III

Shreemadbhagvatgeetaa. The name is included in the *'shreemati'* (a lady whose intellect is compared to the goddess Laxmi), and so she is also called Shrimati Bhagavati Gita. The Gita says that the wheel of the *sansaara* (interactive world) rotates only because of Yagya. Think of it this way – the sansara is a chariot, and a chariot needs wheels. How can a chariot move, unless it has wheels? The Yagya acts as the wheels that move the chariot of this world. The wheels are connected to the hub that has shafts that attach the hub to the rim of the wheel. The Gita says that all worldly interaction is moved by the power of Yagya. The world would not move if there was no Yagya.

The word 'Yagya' will make you think of the ritual of fire sacrifice held at Yagya-shalas, where oblations are offered into the sacred fire, while Brahmins chant Vedic mantras. That is certainly a Yagya, too; I don't deny it. But, the Yagya of the Gita us of a different type. The Gita comments sarcastically on the Yagya done to obtain Swarga.

Yaamimaam pushpitaam vaacham pravadanti vipashritah,

Ve`davaadaratah paartha naanyadasteeti vaadinah.

(2. 46)

(People who are engrossed in sensual pleasures love to praise the fruits of the rituals described in the Vedas.)

If the Yagya that helps you to obtain Swarga is done with a *nishkaama*

bhaava (without any selfish desires), it becomes a means for purifying your antahkaran. It can even give you the *saakshaatkaara* (direct personal experience) of the Paramatma. The form of the Yagya described in the Gita is different. It is:

Annaad bhavanti bhootaani, parjanyaad annasambhavah,

Yagyaadbhavati parjanyo yagyah karmasamudbhavah.

Karma brahmodbhaavam viddhih brahmaaksharasamudbhavam,

Tasmaatsarvagatam brahma nityam yagye` pratishthitam.

E`vam pravartitam chakram naanuvartayateeha yah,

Aghaayurindriyaaraamo mogham paartha sa jeevati.

(3. 13 – 15)

(All beings are created from food. Food grows because of rain. Rain is caused by Yagyas, and Yagya is done by vihit karmas. Know that all actions are created by the Vedas, and the Vedas are created by the Paramatma. This proves that the Supreme, immutable Paramatma is always established in Yagya. A person who does not act according to the traditional practice of Yagya, and neglects to do his duties, is a sinner who wastes his life in indulgences.)

Bhagwan says, 'Arjuna, a person's life becomes a complete waste if he does not help to keep the wheels of the world moving in the right direction. All his years of existence are filled with paapa and sensual indulgences. His senses are like a garden in which he frolics. His life is a waste – *aghaayurindriyaaraamo mogham paartha sa jeevati.'*

Bhagwan spoke about the six spokes of the wheel of Yagya. The Yagya is the hub and six slanting shafts go from the hub to the rim of the wheel. The three lower shafts are the *bhoota* (beings), *anna* (grain; food), and *parjanya* (rain-bearing clouds). The three upper shafts are karma, the Brahman, and *akshara* (the immutable Atma). The Yagya is the central hub. That means, the Yagya is a part of human interaction. It helps us to obtain Brahmagnan. Nobody can live without the Yagya.

I will explain the order of this. The physical body is made from *anna* (food; grain), whether it is the body of a human or a worm; but where do the Yagya and grain come from? They come from *panchabhoota*

(the five elements) and *parjanya* (the clouds that give rain) that nurture all beings. Parjanya comes from the root '*puraayauh*', and refers to the one who takes care of everybody and makes them *poorna* (whole).

How is poorna made? Four horsemen were going when a fifth joined them, he was the *'pancham'*- fifth. He completed the figure of five. Similarly, the figures of *saptam* (seven), *ashtam* (eight), *navam* (nine) and *dasham* (ten) are complete figures, because 'm' is a suffix that indicates wholeness. *Shashta* (six) does not become shashtam – it remains shastha.

You have to observe where the Yagya in this is. The clouds are created by Yagya. Yagya is done by the *prithivee* (earth). The earth upholds everyone and provides food and clothing for all. From what are food, clothing, and abodes made? They are made from clay. But, what is the Yagya in this? The Yagya in this is that you get no bill for all that you make use of. The earth continues to host the *bhandaaraa* (feast), providing food, clothing, medicinal herbs, etc but asks for no payment. That becomes a Yagya done by the earth. The earth continues to do a natural Yagya, providing the matter for making bodies, feeding them, giving clothes, homes and medicines without taking anything in return. You grind the earth beneath your feet, dig it with spades, and bury your dirt in it. Mother earth is doing such a Yagya that she continues to provide all she can for her children without expecting anything. This is called '*praakrita-yagya'* – natural Yagya.

You see clouds; they give the rain that helps the earth to provide food, medicines, and clothing. Your body has some water content. Water enables you to taste the sour, sweet and salty flavors. *Jala* (water) is doing a Yagya.

How much heat is there in your body? Your body temperature rises and reduces. Who gives you this warmth? It is the *te`jas tattva* – the essence of brightness. Agni (fire) is doing a Yagya. What enables your eyes to see? It is the light of the sun and moon. If you buy a plot of land you have to pay the taxes. You have to pay tax for water, electricity etc. However, you use the earth, water, fire, wind, and space without paying anything. You could not breathe if there was no air! You could not stay alive if there was no warmth, and your words would not carry if there was no space. You pay to use the telephone, but your voice is carried free of charge. All these are natural Yagyas.

The Yagya Shastra has two kinds of Yagyas. According to the Poorva

Mimansa, they are the *praakrita* (natural) and *vikrit* (distorted) Yagyas. See how close your life is to the prakrit Yagya. Do you give food, clothing, medicine, housing etc to people the way the earth does? Do you give satisfaction the way water gives a thirsty man? Do you spread brightness in the lives of others? Do you help them to live, the way the wind does? Do you allow freedom of movement to others, the way space does? When these Yagyas become natural and habitual in your life, your life will become a Yagya. The earth is a Yagya; so are fire, wind and space.

The sun and moon are Yagyas. It is amazing that none of them have any desires or feeling of doership. They are *nishkaama* and *kartritva-shoonya* (selfless and without the pride of being the doer). A human being has to make an effort to work without selfish desires and without the feeling of being the doer, until these become natural. After that, the antahkaran develops an inclination for *nivritti* (withdrawing from worldly activities) and gives up worldly activities. The antahkaran that is inclined to *pravritti* (activity) continues to work as a form of worship. These are the two sides of the antahkaran.

The antahkaran is divided into two parts when desire is destroyed. One is the *nivritti pradhaana* (dominated by an inclination to retire) and the other is *pravritti pradhaana* (dominated by an inclination to be active). The Yogi's action will be pravritti pradhan and the Sanyasi will be nivritti pradhan. Because of Tattvagnan (the Gnan about the essence of the Brahman), a Sanyasi will have *bhagvad-sharanaagati* – total dependence on Bhagwan. However, it is a different thing to be a sharanagat because of Gnan, and it is another thing to be a sharanagat because of bhakti. When a person gets Tattvagnan, the *sharanya* (refuge) and the *sharanaagata* (the one who takes refuge) no longer remain separate; they become two forms of the same essence.

Examine your life and see if there is scope for improving it. It is not proper to go on accepting the *vikaara* (distortions) that come into your life. Unless you remove the distortions they will go against the Yagya of your life. If there is no Yagya, and no *aahooti* (oblations) offered for the good of others, your life will be contrary to Yagya. Nature will extract oblations from you one day. If you are buried, it will be *'prithivyaih svaahaa'* (this body is offered to the earth). If your body is immersed in water, it will be *'varunaaya svaahaa'* (this body is offered to Varun, the presiding deity of water). If it is cremated, it will be *'agnaaye` svaahaa'* (this body is offered to Agni Devta). The last rites that are done according to the Shastras are also considered Yagyas. The day will come when your body becomes an oblation to whichever element it is given up to. This body is created by Yagya and concludes

in Yagyga.

Yesterday I had told you how the Chandogya Upanishad says that it is a Yagya when a man implants his seed in his wife's womb. It is a Yagyga when a baby is born, and it is a Yagya to nurture and raise a child. What is it when you get fever? That is also a Yagya. Some ascetics sit under the hot sun, with fires burning on all four sides. You may have seen them at the Kumbha Mela. Why do they do this? They do this as a penance. When you have fever, it comes as your *praarabdha* (fate created by past actions).

There are four causes of illness. One is the imbalance of the *vaata* (wind), cough and *pitta* (bile) in the body. The second is excessive exertion, the third is frustration because what you want doesn't happen, and the fourth is that you don't like the things that happen.

If none of these have caused your illness, take it that it is your prarabdha. When you get fever, give some thought to why it came. Was it due to overeating, or wrong behavior? Since it has come, turn it into a sadhana. If you consider it to be your prarabdha, you will feel unhappy about it, but if you consider it to be *tapa* (asceticism), it will enhance the enthusiasm in your life. You will feel that you are doing a sadhana. You will have an opportunity to test your endurance.

During the war with China, I used to visit wounded soldiers in some of Bombay's hospitals. There was a soldier who was badly wounded in the stomach, but he was able to talk. I told him, 'You will get well after some time, and you will be sent home, to your village. You will no longer be with the Army. The villagers will gather round and ask how you got your injury. When you narrate your experiences, they will rejoice that a man from their village showed such courage. Today, your contribution in protecting your country is making you suffer, but in future, it will be a cause of happiness for you. When you tell people about how you faced the enemy, you will feel a deep satisfaction.' The man's pain-filled eyes brightened at this thought.

Once, my temperature went up to 105, but I endured it without a murmur. Where was the dukha? It became a method of obtaining sukha. Therefore, suffering that comes because of our prarabdha can, if you want, become a cause of happiness. It can be turned into a new karma, a new Yagya, and a new asceticism. So, there is no need for you to suffer helplessly – you can turn your illness into a Yagya by your zeal and attitude.

Somebody told Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj, 'I should have gone into

the forest. I have done no tapasya in my life. What should I do?' Udiya Babaji replied, 'My brother, when four men lift your body to take it to the cremation ground, that will be your going to the wilderness.' Kabir's song tells us that when we leave this world, only a few dry sticks of wood will go with us.

When the body is taken for cremation, that is going to the forest. When the funeral pyre is lit, that is the *havan* (fire sacrifice) of your body. Thus, asceticism, going to the forest, and the final Yagya are all done in this life ultimately. This is prakrit. It happens to everybody. So, it would be a good thing to understand this and inculcate the recommended practices in our life. We don't have to do anything, but we certainly have to understand the things that happen. We have to change our attitudes and feelings.

The Atma does not go from one place to another even after the death of the gross body. It is the feeling (of the subtle body) that is changed. Your eyes will remain closed and your body will lie unmoving, but you may get a feeling that you are in Bombay, or Vrindavan, or Varanasi. If you have done bad deeds you will get the feeling of Narak, and Yamadootas (messengers of Yama, the presiding deity of death) coming to fetch you. If you have done good deeds, you will get the feeling of Swarga, and Devadoota (messengers of the Devtas) coming to fetch you. The feeling you get when you leave the body will endure, depending upon the intensity of your feeling. It may even endure for several thousand years. It is like seeing a dream in which many years pass. The feelings you get depend upon the extent of your paapa and punya.

We should live like the sun and moon, giving something to all. What kind of a breath do you exhale? Does it spread purity or does it spread a foul smell? If your breath is sweet and fresh, you give purity wherever you go, but otherwise, you spread dirt. All bodies emit *tanmaatraa* (subtle forms of matter; vibrations) of *kaama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *shaanti* (tranquility) etc. Samadhi also emits rays. You have to see what Yagya you do, as you pass through life. The moon spreads soothing effulgence, and the sun spreads brightness and warmth. What do you spread? If your life is *pavitra* (pure in the religious sense), you will spread *pavitrataa* (purity) to all, but if your life is *apavitra* (impure), your impurities will sully the atmosphere wherever you go. This life is a Yagya. If we compare it to a Prakrit Yagya, and see it as a worship of the whole world, we will experience that life is indeed a worship.

Now see where the Yagya is. I told Dharati (the earth), 'Dharati, you

give fragrance to all.'

'No,' she said. 'It is not I. The Ishwara gives the fragrance and it spreads naturally.' The earth has no subtle ego of giving, so no paapa or punya get attached to it. None of the elements get attached to paapa or punya; neither fire, nor wind, nor water, nor space, because they have no feeling of being the doer or giving anything.

However, paapa and punya get attached to the tongue in your mouth, because it is attached to your 'I'. Your ears get paapa-punya when you hear harmful gossip, because it sullies your mind. You feel that you say and hear things, and get the fruits of your actions. The fact is that the intellect and the subtle ego of individuality connect us to paapa and punya. The intellect causes expectations and fears. 'This is very good; I should get it.' And, 'This is very bad; it should not happen to me.' These feelings of wanting and wanting to avoid, create paapa-punya. Paapa-punya get attached to a person who has the *ahankaara* (subtle ego) of being the karta and bhokta. When the intellect is free of desire and the feeling of being a separate entity, the person remains untouched by paapa and punya. Every action of his becomes a Yagya.

It is a mistake to think that a Yagya or puja can be done only at a Yagya-shala or Mandir. Puja can be also be done in the moving temples of Bhagwan – the great bhaktas whose hearts are filled with love for Him. Dharma is not restricted to a Yagya-shala or Dharmashala (charitable guest houses); it is done in our daily life. See the truth of this. The eyes see the form, the hands do the work, the feet walk. What you need to do is to see whether they are controlled by Dharma or not. You may have a great many tasks to do, but if you keep yourself within a certain discipline, and a framework of what is right and proper, your actions become a Yagya.

In the same way, your interaction with other people is a Yagya, and what you think is also a Yagya. The meaning of Yagya is not limited to pouring oblations into the sacred fire. When you understand the essence of your life, and the essence of the Paramatma, the form of Yagyga undergoes a complete change. That is why Kabir sings that he does a *parikramaa* (worshipful circumbulation) wherever he walks, and everything he does is a puja. The whole life of a person becomes Yagya when he has this outlook.

A Mahatma lived naked on the banks of the Gangaji for forty or fifty years. His only possession was a small gardening instrument, with which he dug a hole when he went for his morning toilet. He carefully covered up the excreta with earth after he finished, so that the stink

would not spread. A person whose life is a Yagya has to be careful about everything he thinks, says and does. The Mahatma had told me something that may not please you, but I will tell you anyway. He said that no Devta comes within a radius of three kosa (six miles) where a factory emits smoke.

One day, some of us were sitting on the ground with him, when one of the group idly uprooted a few blades of grass. Seeing this, the Mahatma said, 'This grass was clay earlier. Who knows how much tapasya it did, to evolve into grass. Clay tries to move upwards, towards Bhagwan. If a cow had eaten this grass, it would have turned into milk, and a human being would have drunk the milk. The grass would first become milk, then be converted into a human being's body. It would have been reborn until it reached a human form. You uprooted it and threw it away. It will now become clay again.'

We should not ruin the life of even a blade of grass. We should utilize it and so whatever we can to help it to progress. This is called Yagya. *'Yagyaad bhavati parjanyah (3. 14)'* means that when we do Yagya, the strength of the *panchabhoota* (five elements) is enhanced. It comes in the form of *anna* (grain). The sky comes in the form of sound, the wind comes in the form of touch, fire comes in the form of brightness, water comes in the form of flavor, and the earth comes in the form of fragrance. This is the effect of the Yagya. Clouds are created by Yagya and food grows when the clouds shower rain. The bodies of all beings are made from food. Yagya is at the root of all. The earth will not be as it is, if there is no Yagya.

Now, let us look – not ahead, but behind – the Yagya. The Yagya is a *sanskrita* (cultured; refined) form of karma. How does karma become Yagya? Karma becomes Yagya when it is done according to the rules of the Shastras and the constitution of eternal righteousness. *'Karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahmaakshara samudbhavam. (3. 15)'*. 'Brahm' means the eternal laws of righteousness that are given in the Vedas. Where did the Brahm come from? Where did the Vedas come from? The root cause of this world is the Brahman. It is called the *'akshara tattva',* because its essence is the immutable, eternal, and indestructible Paramatma.

That is why the Gita says –

Tasmaatsarvagatam brahma nityam yagye` pratishthitam.

(3. 15)

(That is why the all-pervading, supreme Akshara, the Paramatma, is always established in a Yagya.)

If you wish to get the *saakshaatkaara* (direct personal experience) of the Paramatma, it is essential for you to obtain Gnan of the Yagya, then of karma, then of the Vedas, and then of the Akshar Tattva. When you obtain the Gnan of the Akshar Tattva, the cycle is complete.

When a person does not pay attention to this, what is he doing? One man told me, 'I am just not able to do Sandhya Vandan.'

'All right, my brother,' I said, 'but tell me, what do you do at the time when this ritual is to be done? Do you go to the Club, play cards, or chit-chat a lady friend? Or, do you sit in Samadhi? What prevents you from doing the Sandhya Vandan?'

People have time for all other activities, but no time for Sandhya Vandan. Oh, if you can't do the ritual, you can think about Bhagwan and chant His name. If you do something that is better, you are not bound to do this ritual. You can do the japa of your mantra instead. But if you fritter away that time in worthless activities that scatter your mind and result in paapa, how can you say that you don't have time to do Sandhya Vandan? The Gita says that a life spent in sinful activities and sensual indulgences is a wasted life. *'Aghaayurindriyaaraamo mogham paartha sa jeevati (3. 16).'*

I will tell you about another man who asked me why he should do the Sandhya Vandan. 'Does your father do the Sandhya Vandan?' I asked.

'Yes, he does.'

'Did your grandfather do it?'

'Yes, he did it meticulously.'

'Then, I ask you, why you don't do a ritual that has been a tradition in your family? You should carry on with the tradition and do this ritual of Dharma.'

The man asked another question. 'What is the benefit of doing the Sandhya Vandan?'

‘My dear boy, greed and gain have enslaved you,’ I told him. ‘You are not prepared to do anything unless you get some benefit! If that be the case, your *nishkaamataa* (being free of selfish desires) is a mockery!’

When I was a child, I was told something of great importance. From the age of eight, up to the time we take Sanyas, a man should definitely spend five or ten minutes doing something without having any consideration of profit. Sandhya Vandan is an example of nishkama karma in our life. So is the chanting of the Gayatri mantra, etc. These are not done for obtaining Swarga or temporal benefits. They are done to cultivate the habit of doing good deeds with no thought of personal gain. Disinterested benevolence should have a place in our life.

We should do at least one thing that is not done to get pleasure, profit, comfort or wealth. This is a daily Yagya. This is bhajan (meditating lovingly on Bhagwan). In Sanskrit, the puja of the Devta, meditating on Him, and doing daan are considered to be Yagyas. But, how can you ask why you should do nishkama karma when you want to know why you should do a ritual that takes only five minutes?

My brother, the absence of selfish interest in the antahkaran is its *shuddhi* (purification). What else is shuddhi? Your antahkaran is purified when you do the Sandhya Vandan, because you do something without any thought of profit. The principle of Dharma, karma, and Yagya in our life is very important. You can understand it if you have a desire to purify your antahkaran, fulfill your duties, please Bhagwan, and be liberated from the cycle of rebirth. However, if your goal is material and worldly gain, you will find it difficult to understand the principle of Yagya. Even for this, you have to give some thought.

The greatest Mahapurush, the Mahapurush of the Gita, Sri Krishna, does karma; but how? He does Yagya, but what kind of a Yagya?

Brahmaarpanam brahma havirbrahmagnau brahmanaa hutam,

Brahmaiva te`na gantavyam brahmakarmasamaadhinaa.

(4. 24)

(The Yagya in which the oblations and implements are the Brahman, the one who does the Yagya is the Brahman, and the sacred fire is also the Brahman, is the Brahmakarma. A person who is steady in this feeling gets the Brahman as the fruit of the Yagya.)

This is the Yagya of a person who has obtained Gnan about the Brahman. The words that follow – *De`vame`vaapare` yagyam yoginah paryupaasate` (4. 25)* – refer to the Yagya of a person who worships the Devtas. That Yagya is also required. There are many Devtas, like the eye, ear, tongue, etc that are the presiding deities of our senses, of the elements, and many others. We should also offer worship to them. Offerings are made to them, and to their divine forms.

There is another Yagya, called the *'Yagye`naivapajuhvati'*, meaning, give the oblations of the Atma – which is the essence of Yagya – to the Brahman, through Yagya. This is the *aadhyaatmik* (metaphysical) Yagya. The Yagya where oblations are made to the different Devtas of the senses is the Daivi Yagya. The Gita describes many kinds of Yagyas.

Therefore, you should give repeated thought to the meaning of Yagya. Think about how much you have accumulated and how much you have given in charity; how much you worked for your family, and how much for society. It is a Yagya to do things to help others. The biggest factor in daan, tapa, and Yagya is that the meditation we do to obtain Atmagnan, is also a Yagya. What we give to others is also a Yagya, and it is also a Yagya when no give and take is involved. Thus, the entire life of a human being is a Yagya.

Be aware of these factors, and see how much discipline you have brought into your life. The more you live within the framework of Dharma, the greater the Yagya in your life. The more help you have given others, the greater the Yagya in your life. Discipline is a Yagya, daan is a Yagya, helping others is a Yagya, and giving comfort is also a Yagya. You should examine the degree of Yagya in your life, because it is of great importance. The Gita goes so far as to say that you can never get enduring happiness if there is no Yagya in your life. Getting happiness in realms after death is out of question.

Naayam lokostyayagyasya kutonyah kurusattama.

(4. 31)

I concede that there are many desires in your life. You have accumulated much, and you have a great deal of pride. However,

unless your life contains Yagya, all these are useless and causes of sorrow. Three things begin to wane as soon as they are spoken of. One is what you have studied, the other is what you have given, and the third is the Yagyas you have done. If a person advertises the fact that he has studied Mimansa, Nyaya, Vedanta, Advaita Siddhi, etc the value of his learning will diminish. Similarly, the effect of daan and Yagya also diminish if you boast about them.

Our actions have two *kaarana* (causes), six *adhishthaana* (basis), six *anga* (parts), six *fala* (fruits), four *prakaara* (methods), three *vibhaa* (branches), and three *naada* (sounds). That makes a total of thirty reactions. One person says that there are eighty one reactions. Our books on Dharma are amazing. They should be given deep thought. The things that purify our like should be inculcated into our daily routine.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan IV

Among all Yagyas, the most superior and purifying is the Gnan Yagya; giving Gnan to others. Other Yagyas are described to explain its superiority. The Gita says that the *gnaanamaya* Yagya is superior to the *dravyamaya* Yagya. What is the Dravya Yagya? It is the ritual where dravya – external substances – are put into the ritual fire as offerings. Shri Krishna has said that a Gnan Yagya is superior to a Dravya Yagya – *'Shre`yaandravyamayaat yagyaat gnaana-yagyah parantapah' (4. 33)*.

It is quite simple – if you just give away five rupees with no feelings, it is different from giving five rupees with affection and sympathy. The internal is more important than the external. We should have goodwill in our heart. The Shastras give clarifications about daan. To give shoes and an umbrella to someone is called *'alpa daan'* – a small charity. To give something out of pity to a cripple is called *'heena daan'*. That is not to say that these daans should not be given; but it is not enough to give once in a while. Daan should definitely be done in every possible way, but you should also try to make arrangements for people to get a regular supply of essentials like food, clothes and medicine. That is what the Shastras advocate.

Dravya Yagya is different, Tapo Yagya (offering asceticism) is different, and Gnan Yagya is different. However, all these are *karmamaya* Yagyas – Yagyas of action. That which happens within, is considered to be the *saadhan* (method) of the Gnan Yagya. Ostentation is no part of a genuine Yagya.

I will tell you another thing that is not generally known to people. When donations are collected from the public for doing a Yagya, it becomes a *gana* (public) Yagya. The *apoorva* (unseen fruit) created by the Yagya is not able to enter anybody's antahkaran to purify it, or bestow other benefits, because many people have contributed to it. This is why a Yagya should always be an individual undertaking.

Doing something for the benefit of society is a different thing, and doing a Yagya is a different thing. The method of a Yagya is that before the offering goes into the fire of the Brahman, the offering is made to the three; and before it goes to the three, the offering is made

to the five, and before that it is made to the ten.

Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are the three Devtas of the triple aspect of the Ishwara. To worship the one Ishwara, you have to first understand these three Devtas. Before worshipping the three Devtas you have to understand the Devtas that preside over the five *gnaane`ndriya* (sense organs). Before that you have to understand the five Devtas of the *karma`ndriya* (organs of action).

You see, the Devtas that give us strength and Gnan abide in our body. The Devta in our eyes gives us sight. The Devta in our ears gives us the ability to hear. In the same way, there are other Devtas like the Surya (sun) and Dig (directions) Devtas. When offerings are made to these specific Devtas, it is called the Daiva Yagya. These Devtas strengthen our body and senses. To indulge the *indriya* (senses) is also a *homa* (offering to the sacred fire), and to restrain the senses and abstain, is also a Yagya.

The Gita says –

Shrotraadeeneendriyanyanye` sanyamaagnishu juhvati,

(4. 26)

Both Yagyas are *paavana* (purifying for others also), and they purify our heart – *paavanaani maneeshinaam (18. 26)*.

A wet cloth dries in the wind and becomes *pavitra* (pure in the religious sense). Some things become pavitra when washed in water, or heated in the fire, or buried in the earth. In the same way, we should bring into our life the Yagya that makes our antahkaran paavan and pavitra, pure and bright.

One Yagya is to eat only after giving food to someone else. Don't worry about who you should give food to – it can be anyone, even a bird or an animal. Feed whoever you can. Feed the learned people. All your paapa will be removed if you feed another before you eat. Your antahkaran will be cleansed. This used to be a common practice in most homes in earlier times.

There was a gentleman who lived close to our village. He was so generous that he would feed anyone who passed by his door. At times, he had to sell household utensils to buy food. One day, he saw me passing by and took me into his house. He had special food prepared

for me. As I ate, I commented, 'Babuji, to feed others is a greater joy than the joy of eating, isn't it?'

'Babaji,' he replied, 'it is not proper for me to tell you anything, but I am much older than you, so I will tell you. The joy of remaining hungry after feeding someone is greater than the joy of eating after feeding someone.'

Vigyana Bhikshu has written, in his commentary on the Yoga Darshan, that the joy of eating is the joy of a *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body), but the joy of feeding others is the joy of the Ishwara. The Brahman gets joy in feeding others, not in eating. That is Brahmananda. It is Brahmananda that gives existence and inspiration to all. Those who eat after feeding others are Satpurush (saintly people), and they become free of all sin.

Earlier, people did the Nitya (daily) Yagya – it was also done at our house. Gowgras (a few rotis) were put aside, to be given to cows, crows, mendicants and unexpected visitors. One roti was also put into the fire on which the food was cooked. Only then did any of the family eat. I had once gone to Seth Jaydayal Goenka's home at Bankuda. On the day of my return, the Nitya Yagya, called Balivaishvadeva, was delayed. We were afraid that I would miss my train. Sethji told me, 'Please have your food. We will do the Balivaishvadeva later.'

'How can you do it after I have eaten?' I asked.

'Your eating will be a part of Balivaishvadeva,' he said. 'To feed a guest is part of the ritual.' I had nothing to say. Sethji was very knowledgeable about the subtleties of Dharma.

A person who cooks only for himself eats the paapa in the food, so we should make it a habit to feed someone before eating. People have been practicing this ritual for generations, and it can be done by all.

Now, we will talk about the *aaraadhanaa* (worship) of the Devtas. What are the trees that stand in your garden and the forests? They are Yagya. Even when they dry up, their wood is used for the sacred fire. Their fruits give satisfaction, their flowers spread fragrance, and their leaves cool the air. They provide refreshing shade and greenery. Their bark, roots, and buds are used for medicinal purposes. The trunks give wood. When wood is burnt, it turns into coal. Trees are a form of Yagya incarnate, because they are useful in every way. We should consider them the image of Yagya and serve them. A human being

should feel a sense of shame when he sees a tree. A tree is far less evolved and yet it gives so many more benefits to all beings than humans, who are higher on the ladder of evolution. We humans cause more suffering for others than give benefits.

The characteristic of a Satpurush is that he does not get angry even if someone cuts him. A person should be like a tree in this. In life, tolerance, magnanimity, and the ability to forgive, instead of being vengeful, are saintly qualities. A saintly person forgets and forgives the harm others do to him. His mind is controlled. The tree is less evolved than we are, yet it does Yagya; why shouldn't we, as humans, do Yagya in our life?

Now take a look at your body. We have, to some extent, covered the subject of Yagya in *vyavahaara* (interaction). *Yama* (self-restraint), *niyama* (daily disciplines), *satya* (speaking the truth), *aste`ya* (not coveting what belongs to another), *brahmacharya* (the rules of celibacy for the different stages of life), and *aparigraha* (avoiding accumulating more than we require) are also Yagya. In our dealings with others, we should be careful that we do not deceive or mislead anyone by telling lies and half truths. We should be careful that we don't create suffering for anyone, or take anything that belongs to someone else. If a *grihastha* (married householder) practices the rules of conjugal living according to the Shastras, it is brahmacharya. Even if your possessions are rightfully yours, you should not hoard more than you require. All these are Yagya, if they become a part of your life. Niyam are essential for improving your life. *Tapasyaa* (asceticism), *pavitrataa* (purity according the Shastras), *santosh* (being content with what you get), *svaadhyaaya* (studying the Shastras and one's self), and *eeshvara praanidhaana* (bowing to the Ishwara's will) should be inculcated in your life. In your social interaction, you should also practice *ahinsaa* (non-violence), in addition to these.

After that come the *aasana* (Yogic exercises), for physical fitness, and *praanaayaama* (breath control exercises) for strengthening the senses, and your ability to restrain them. The movement gradually moves inwards. Yama is our behavior with others. Niyama is cultivating good personal habits. Asana is for good health, and pranayam is for regulating the actions of the body. Yagya is to restrain the sense organs, and prevent them from succumbing to temptations. This Yagya is called the *pratyaahaara* (withdrawing the senses) Yagya. You should practice it for a little while every day. Let your eyes see, but don't focus on the colors. Let your ears hear, but don't pay attention to whether you are being praised or criticized. Let the senses function without attaching your 'I' to them. This is a nivritti Yagya – the Yagya

of withdrawing from the outer world.

After this comes the *antar* (inner) Yagya. To offer up the actions of the senses and *praana* (life spirit) to the fire of self-restraint is the internal Yagya. What is the fire of *aatma-sanyama* (self restraint)? The offerings are made in three forms – *dhaaranaa* (bringing the mind repeatedly to the object of meditation), *dhyaana* (meditation) and Samadhi. When the focus of all three is the same, it is called '*trayame`katra sanyam' (Yoga Darshan 3.4)*

Now, observe what your dharana is like. Try to ensure that your thoughts do not go outside this room for five minutes. I will not become silent. I will continue to speak, but your mind should not wander out of this room. You can look at the people sitting here, or at the mike or tape recorder, but look at things that are inside this room, not outside. This is called 'dharana'. The Kundalini Shakti – also called the Serpent Power – moves upwards through the centers of pure energy called the Muladhara Chakra, Svadhishthana Chakra, Manipuraka Chakra, Vishuddha Chakra, Agya Chakra and then the Sahasrara Chakra, until it merges into the Paramatma. To keep the mental focus on one object is called 'dhayana'. When the difference between the *dhye`ya* (the object of meditation) and the *dyaataa* (the one who meditates) is dissolved, it becomes a Samadhi. This is not difficult to understand; it is quite simple. The name is not separate from the Gnan about it, and an object is not separate from its name.

When the mental focus is established in the Gnan *svaroopa* (essence of Gnan), what is the *havan* (fire sacrifice) in it? The object – the watch – came into the word 'watch', the word came into Gnan, and all three were immersed into the *gnaanaagni* (the fire of Gnan), and you became *shaanta* (quiet). Your mind became focused. How long will this state last? This question comes to those who are not aware of the benefits.

You see, the Ishwara speaks when we fall silent. When we cease to be active, we experience His actions. When we let go of our own *shakti* (strength), His shakti is activated. And, when we give up our *'aham'* ('I'; the subtle ego of individuality), the *nir-aham* (egoless) Brahman begins to shine and glow. This is also a method of Yagya.

Immerse the object into the sound, the sound into Gnan, and the Gnan into *poornataa* (the wholeness); and sit in an *akhanda* (unbroken) Samadhi. You will say that I am talking about Mahatmas, but that is not the case. You work, and fall into an exhausted sleep because you don't know the trick of working. What is the heartbeat in your body?

Your body has a pendulum, like a clock's. It ticks in the seed of your father and in the womb of your mother. It goes on ticking as long as you live. Why doesn't it get tired? Your heartbeat should also get tired and get some rest; but you know what will happen if it stops to rest! That is why it does not sleep. You may get tired and go to sleep, but you heart continues to beat until the moment of your death.

Now, see how work can become a Yagya. I have told you that your vyavahar is also a homa, a Yagya. To clarify this further, I will tell you something about my childhood days. I used to have my meals with my grandfather. The mud floor would be wiped with either cow-dung paste, or watery clay. There were wooden seats on which we sat to eat. These would also be washed and placed on the ground for us to sit on.

My grandfather would tell me to do a havan of the first five mouthfuls of food. With each mouthful, I would say '*svaahaa'* (I offer this), taking the name of the five *vaayu* (winds) that abide in the body – *praana, apaana, vyaana, samaana,* and *udaana.* What was this? I was eating, and also saying that I was offering the morsel to the winds, turn by turn. The food went into my stomach and nowhere else. It appeased my hunger and gave me satisfaction and energy. Then, why the 'svaha'?

The fact is that food is a sense object, and I was offering it to the fire of my hunger. This is called *'praanaahooti'* – an offering to the prana vayu that keeps me alive. The meaning is, 'It is not I who is eating. The food is being consumed by the five winds that abide in me.' That is why Bhagwan has said, in the Gita, that He sits in the stomach of every being, and digests the food they eat.

Aham vaishvaanaro bhootvaa praaninaam de`hamaashritah,

Praanaapaana samaayuktah pachaamyannam chaturvidham.

(15. 14)

Look – what are the Yagygas? It is a Yagya to eat, and it is a Yagya to see, hear, taste, smell and touch. How are these actions Yagyas? They are Yagyas because the different objects of the different senses are being offered as oblations. To give up the subtle ego of doer-ship when using the sense organs, with the thought that the objects of the

senses are being offered to the presiding deities of the senses, is the Yagya.

You are, thus, the essence of Agni (the fire into which oblations are placed), and all these objects are being offered to the essence of fire. Now see where the havan (Yagya) is. It is when you interact with others. How do you get the taste of food? The flavor comes from water, but from where does the tongue get the ability to taste? It is a Yagya-kriya (the act of working as a Yagya) that is being carried out.

A boy has the Yagyopaveeta Sanskara (sacred thread ceremony). A Mahatma comes to his house and tells him to do another havan. That is, when he does the ritual of Sandhya Vandan, or chants the Gayatri Mantra, he is to do a *homa* (fire sacrifice). What offering is he to make? He has to offer up the five tendencies that bring sorrow. They are *avidyaa* (ignorance; nescience), *asmitaa* (pride), *raga* (attachment), *dve`sha* (aversion) and *abhinive`sha* (identification with the body). These offerings are made to the triangle of fire, called the '*naabhi chakra'*. This energy center is located near the naval. These five oblations are poured into the *gnaanaagni* (the fire of Gnan) and have to be burnt every day. The tendencies are like the demon Raktabeej, whose every drop of blood turned into a new demon.

Both the Anand Ramayana and the Valmiki Ramayana mention an episode when Shri Rama shot arrows at Ravana's heads. Nine of them would be severed. They would float in the air guffawing horribly, but one head always remained unsevered. Shri Rama used the invincible Brahmastra, which did succeed, but new heads sprouted up at once. This was the extraordinary power of Ravana. Years later, after Ram Chandra had become the King, He would recall the gruesome sight and shudder. These five faults – vanity, delusion, nescience, attachments and aversions – are reborn every day.

Matali, the charioteer, told Shri Rama, 'Maharaj, You cannot kill Ravana by cutting off his heads. Their root is in his heart, so shoot into his heart to destroy him.' Therefore, we should make these five offerings every day, until we obtain Brahmagnan. Unless the ego is offered up into the fire of the knowledge of the Brahman, it will not be destroyed.

Brahmaagnaanyaavapare` yagyam yagye`naivopajuhvati (4. 25)

This is the Yagya of the *jigyaasu* (seeker of the ultimate Gnan). It is the Yagya of the Atmadev, who is the karta of the Yagya. So, let the Atma that is attached to your individual body merge into the Paramatma, and make an offering of it into the purifying fire of the Brahman. There will be no difference between the *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body) and the Ishwara; no feeling of being the karta or bhokta (the one who experiences the fruits of his deeds). All these will be burnt in the Brahmagni.

What is this Yagya? Our Atma is Yagya, and the Paramatma is also Yagya, so get rid of the feeling that they are separate. Placing the oblation of your individuality into the sacred fire, merge into the Paramatma, and let go of the Ishwara that is superimposed on the shuddha Brahman, so that everything else is dissolved into the Brahman. This is the havan of the jigyaasu.

Now see the havan of a Brahmagnani. All his *vyavahaara* (interaction) is a Yagya. A Brahmagnani's Yagya is amazing. We have discussed this shloka earlier.

Brahmaarpanam brahm havirbrahmaagnau brahmanaa hutam,

Brahmaiva te`na gantavyam brahm karma samaadhinaa.

(4. 24)

The ladle used for pouring *ghee* (rarified butter) into the havan is called a *'sruvaa'*. It is the implement used for the *arpana* (making the offering). What is the sruva here? It is the Brahman. What is the substance that is offered? That is also the Brahman! So is the agni into which the offerings are poured. Who does the havan? It is the Brahman who does the havan. Where do the offerings go? They go to the Brahman, because all the actions, substances, and people have taken on the form of the Brahman. So, come; focus your mind, and meditate to understand where this Yagya is being done. This Yagya is being done automatically in the life of an enlightened person who is liberated from *maayaa* (the Ishwara's power of illusion), and has obtained the experience of being one with the Brahman.

Very well; if the Yagya is an automatic activity, where will the fruit of the karma go?

The Gita gives the answer –

Gatasangasya muktasya gnaanaavasthitache`tasah,

Yagyaayaacharatah karma samagram pravileeyate`.

(4. 23)

No fruit is created by such a Yagya. A Brahmagnani never gets the feeling that he is the karta, or that he will get the fruit of his actions. He has no subtle ego of individuality. He goes neither to Swarga, nor to Narak.

The karmas of an enlightened person will not remain separate from the Paramatma, because they have no base to rest upon. And so, a Brahmagnani's karma is always a form of the Brahman. That is why Shri Krishna said, '*Sarva karmaakhilam paartha gnaane` parisamaapyate` (4. 33)* – O Arjuna, all karmas conclude in Gnan.' The Brahmagnani's Gnan about the Brahman is the true Yagya. In this Yagya, all the differences between the jeeva, Ishwara, and the jagat (world) are burnt in the agni of Gnan. Where are these differences perceived? They are perceived in the mind. The mind is the cause of all that seems separate and different.

The Vedantis believe that what is not experienced during the deep sleep state is all imagined. Just as we see many things in our dreams, we see things when we are awake, but they are actually nothing more than perceptions, imagined by us. They have no permanent reality. It is the mind that perceives the triple existence of the jagat, jeeva and Ishwara; the jagat that is enjoyed, the jeeva who enjoys, and the Ishwara who enables the jeeva to enjoy. The mind is superimposed upon the substratum of the Brahman. So, the real Yagya is to negate the mind. Let it exist, let it play, eat, and do what it wants, but know that nothing exists except the Brahman, because *'sarvam karmaakhilam paartha gnaane` parisamaaptyate`'* – all actions, whether they are physical, mental, or of some deeper level or state, conclude in Gnan.

Karma, the cause of karma, the karta, the items used, the fruit, and the one who experiences the fruit – all get merged into the Yagya of Tattvagnan. Gnan is the ultimate form of Yagya. The Gita tells us how we can inculcate Yagya in our lives, to obtain Gnan.

Apare`niyataahaaraah praanaanpraane`shu juhvati,

Sarve`pye`te` yagyavido yagyakshapitakalmashaah.

Yagyashishtaamritabhujo yaanti brahma sanaatanam.

(4. 30 – 31)

(Some Yogis sacrifice the apana vayu into the prana vayu, and others do the reverse. Some restrict their food and do *praanaayaama* [breath-control exercises] as a Yagya. They know the different Yagyas and destroy their papa through them.

The Yogis who experience the elixir that remains after the Yagya is completed, merge into the eternal Parabrahma Paramatma.)

In this state, only the Brahman exists. There is no other path that can take a seeker to a downward trend. A person should progress step by step in his sadhana, to obtain this Yagya. Note the meaning of the word '*niyataahaaraa'* (regulated intake) in this shloka. Do you permit yourself to do whatever you feel like doing? Do you in indulge every temptation that comes before you? Do you take everything that seems attractive? Do you say whatever comes to your mind? Four points should be kept in mind.

What do you do?

Whatever I feel like.

What do you accumulate?

Whatever I feel like.

What do you indulge in?

Whatever I feel like.

What do you say?

Whatever I feel like.

Now, give some attention to your *aahaara* (intake).

Aaharanti iti aahaarah' – what we take from outside and place inside, is called '*aahaara'*. Not only objects, but even words are ahara. What we read and accumulate subconsciously or consciously, is ahara. The fact is, that the greater the accumulation of words, the greater in the mental disturbance. The Pundits are proud of their learning, but the greater their learning, the stronger is their metal clamor and confusion. It is the same with wealth. The richer you are, the more tension you have. People who have many sources of sensual pleasures, face the same problem. A person who is very garrulous is bound to hurt people. He will be agitated to the extent of agitation he causes. Therefore, the meaning of *niyataahaaraa* is that if you wish to bring Yagya into your life, do things that are right and proper. Restrict your indulgences to what is right and proper, say what is right and proper, and accumulate what is right and proper. When you use restraint in these four areas of your daily life, Yagya will awaken in your life.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Pravachan V

While speaking about Yagya, Shri Krishna said that pranayama is also a havan.

Apaane` juhvati praanam praane`paanam tathaapare`,

Praanaapaanagatee ruddhvaa praanaayaamaparaayanah.

(4. 29)

The air we breathe in is called *'praana'*, and this keeps us alive. The air we exhale is called *'apaana'*. *Pooraka* is breathing in, *kumbhaka* is to stop the movement of breath, and *re`chaka* is breathing out. These three are the havan in pranayama. Kumbhak has two forms – *baahya kumbhaka* (holding the breath after exhaling) and *aantar kumbhaka* (holding the breath after inhaling). All four are mentioned here. To merge our apana vayu into the air outside, is also a havan. To draw in the prana vayu and merge it into the life within, is also a havan. Holding the breath after breathing in, is a Yagya, and to stop breathing after exhaling is also a Yagya.

A Yagya is not done only in a fire; it is done also in the *prithivee* (earth), *jala* (water), *aakaasha* (space), and *vaayu* (air). That means, all creation is a form of Yagya. Every action in Nature becomes a Yagya, but it is not enough to accept this intellectually. I had told you yesterday, that you need *niyataahaara* , intake that is regulated. Most

people tend to overeat. The food is not digested; it is wasted. Ayur Veda tells us that the rule is to fill half the stomach with food, one quarter with liquids and leave one quarter empty for the movement of the wind.

A Mahatma I know would laughingly say that people have two occupations – one is to convert food into earth and the other is to convert earth into food! Farmers make food from the earth, and food gives life to everyone, to those who live in cities, or forests, whether they are grihasthas or Sanyasis. Nobody can live without food. The *vyavahaara* (social interaction) of growing food from the earth is a Yagya done by farmers. Others are busy converting food into earth! Thus, our farmers are great Yagniks. They grow food on the earth that is heated by the sun, water and tend the crop. Their Yagya is growing food. Unless food is regulated, no Yagya will be fulfilled.

What does *niyata* (regulated) *aahaara* (intake) mean? Some people say that it means to eat only as much as is needed for survival. Some people say it means eating only what is permitted by the Shastras. That actually means that we should observe some rules about our food. It is not healthy to overeat on some days and fast on some days; eat heavy food at times and light food at random. Doctors tell us to count our calories. In the same way, our diet should be regulated. People who are thin and weak should not undertake fasting. Fasting should be done by those who are fit and healthy.

Our ancient sages generally preferred to take food as a *vrata* – an austerity or religious practice. There is a vrata called the 'Chandrayan', in which a person increases one mouthful per day when the moon is ascending, and reduces one mouthful a day when it is descending. The total mouthfuls of food in a month are 240. This vrata has variations. One variation is the Pipika Chandrayan, named after an ant, because an ant is thin in the middle. This is done with the no-moon coming in the middle of the month of the vrata. Another is the Yuva Chandrayan, when the full moon comes in the middle of the month of the vrata. The third is the Yati Chandrayan, in which the person has eight mouthfuls a day for one month. Each mouthful is the size of an amla – a table tennis ball. The person eats four mouthfuls for lunch and four for dinner. This does bring weakness to the person. All these permit a total of 240 mouthfuls in thirty days.

The rule of eating is the same as making an oblation. Tamasik people (who have the lowly tendencies of Tamo guna) make an *aahooti* (sacrificial offering) of meat, but the Sattvik people (who have the lofty tendency of Sattva guna) make an offering of things that are

considered pavitra by the Shastras. They offer items like barley, black grams, fruits rarified butter, etc. A Sattvik Yagya is done with Sattvik oblations, a Rajo guni (of mixed tendencies) Yagya is done with Rajas offerings, and a Tamo guni Yagya is done with Tamas offerings. We can make a Yagya of what we eat.

There was a gentleman who was my associate for about twenty five years. He had taken a vow to eat only nineteen mouthfuls in a day. He was healthy and handsome, and did all his own work, but he never ate more than nineteen mouthfuls in a day. He had gauged his requirements of food and come to the conclusion that this was enough for him.

Ramanuja Acharyaji Maharaj says that what we eat should be *shuddha* – pure according to our Shastras. The item should be shuddha by nature. Non-vegetarian items are *ashuddha* (not shuddha) by nature. There is another factor in this, which is generally not understood by people. People say that the Shastras forbid all that is bad, and permit all that is good. However, the Shastras place restrictions even on good things, because we have an urge to get more and more of what is good. We get angry when we don't get good things. A man gets angry when a good girl refuses to marry him. People want the best food, best house, best clothes, and best spouse, but such desires often lead to wrong actions, unless they are kept under control.

This is why the Shastras place restraints on even good things. People ask why the Shastras forbid some foods even though laboratory tests show that they are beneficial for health. No, my brother, you are going against the rules if you consume these foods. The Shastras forbid items that have some inherent *dosha* (fault). To break the law is wrong. You may see that the road on the right is empty, and there is no policeman to catch you, but you should keep to the left. In countries where people drive on the right hand side of the road, the same rule will apply in reverse. People must follow the rules. To go against the rules is a fault, because avid desire makes people do what they know to be wrong. So, even if you are tempted to eat or drink something that is forbidden by the Shastras, you should not succumb to temptation. As far as bad things are concerned, even a rustic will tell you that this is rotten and should not be eaten!

Thus, food should be naturally shuddha. The place where it is cooked should be shuddha, the utensils in which it is cooked should be shuddha, too. Brinjals and raw bananas turn bad if cooked in an iron vessel, but if milk is heated in an iron vessel, its nutritional value is enhanced. Curd becomes impure if set in a brass vessel. The

condiments that are added to food should also be pure.

There was a Mahatma at Vrindavan, who was very learned. Some Sindhi devotees of his invited him to Karachi. The Mahatma was extremely particular about the purity of what he ate. He would draw water from a well to wash the utensils, and cook his own food. One of the devotees gave him a mixture of spices to add to his dal (a lentil curry). The Mahatma tried it and liked it very much. He would add it to his dal every day. When he prepared to return to Vrindavan, he asked the devotee to tell him how to prepare the mixture, so that he could prepare it and add it to his dal. He was told that it contained the powder of dried fish! You can imagine his feelings when he heard this!

Thus, food becomes impure if any impure substance is added to it. That is why everything – the food, the place, utensils and condiments – should all be shuddha. If a lady weeps as she cooks rotis, how can those who eat them have happiness or good health? If a cow weeps as she is milked, how can the milk give good health and happiness to those who consume the milk?

An object cannot be made pavitra by washing with soap and water, or heating in an oven. Purity comes when the item is bought by money that is pavitra. It must be honestly earned and rightfully yours. When all factors are pavitra, and the food is eaten at the right time in proper quantity, in the proper place, and in the right way, by a person who is healthy, it becomes a Yoga (attaching yourself to the Ishwara). This Yoga-Yagya brings good fortune when you do pranayama and meditation. '*Yogo bhavati dukhahaa (6. 17)*'

This is the essence of Dharma. Dharma means the ability to uphold. It gives us the ability to stop our feet from going where they shouldn't, stop our hands from doing what they shouldn't, and our tongue from saying what should not be said. This power of self-control is called Dharma. Dharma does not mean applying sandalwood or vermillion marks on the forehead, or wearing a particular kind of necklace. Dharma is to stop ourselves from doing anything that should not be done.

Sakaama (with any specific desire) Yagyas are like going to a luxury hotel and depositing the money for a future visit. You can stay there and enjoy every facility it offers, until your credit runs out. Then you have to leave. In the same way, people earn punya through sakama Yagyas and go to Swarga when they die. They indulge in all the sensual pleasures, but nothing in Swarga belongs to them. Everything belongs to the resort called Swarga, and the duration of a person's stay

there depends upon the credit of punya built up during their life on this earth.

All Yagyas, tapa and daan that purify our antahkaran are considered to be Yagyas. Even in this, the Yagya that is done with objects is considered to be inferior to the Yagya done by Gnan. What is to be seen is, who is the *bhoktaa* (the one who enjoys the fruits)? Only a karta can be a bhokta. That is the rule. If a jeeva feels, 'I am the karta', he will get the fruits of his action. The same applies to paapa karmas. It is not possible that we do something wrong and someone else gets the punishment. Nobody can get away by saying that everything is Bhagwan!

If an immature person speaks about the Brahman, and says that even paapa is the Brahman, wrong actions are the Brahman, and kama-krodha are also the Brahman, he will never attain liberation. A *maryaadaa* (ethical framework) should be present in life.

How is the maryada created? There is no maryada in the Brahman, because the Brahman is non-dual. There is no maryada in Prakriti (Nature; the Ishwara's power of Creation), because everything is Prakriti. There is no maryada in Maya (the Ishwara's power of delusion), because it is a play of magic. There is no maryada in the *panchabhoota* (the five elements), because they are the same in everything. There is no maryada in *che`tan* (pure consciousness) because chetan and *ache`tan* (the sensate and insensate) are one. Maryada does not come into any object. It is established by the rules. That is why we say that Dharma is established only by the Shastras. When something is done with the thought of the good or bad qualities of the object, that is not Dharma. Dharma is that, by which we save ourselves from succumbing to the temptation of wrong desires.

The maryada is made by the instructions of the Shastras. By keeping on the right path, a person can obtain liberation. If he breaks the maryada by saying that everything is the Brahman, he exposes his ignorance about Dharma. We do not accept a maryada that is based on the qualities of an object; our maryada is based on what the Shastras tell us to do. That is why a person who has the feeling of being the karta (doer) has no option but to be the bhokta as well. If you do something you shouldn't, and get a headache, you will say at once that your headache is due to your wrong action. Whenever any sorrow comes into your life, your mind will be weakened, and you will connect the misfortune to past misdeeds. Therefore, to be careful about obeying the rules is to be careful about Dharma. That is why it is said that what is written in the Shastras is Dharma, and what the

Shastras forbid is adharma.

The question that now comes up is – who is the karta-bhokta? As long as a jeeva considers himself to be the karta of good and bad deeds, he is forced to experience the fruits of his actions. When he knows – not merely accepts – the supreme Satya, paapa-punya no longer get attached to him. Simple acceptance can be completely wrong. It can certainly benefit, if it is in keeping with Gnan, but otherwise, it is useless.

Who is the karta-bhokta in our body? This is where the principle of Bhakti comes in and says, 'Look; your belief, that you have done this and that, and that you are experiencing this and that, is absolutely false. You are neither the karta nor the bhokta.' This is written in the Gita. There are excellent messages in the Gita that can make your life a liberated one. You can obtain great joy by listening, reading, and understanding it.

When we do a Yagya, we give an *aahuti* (oblation) saying, '*Indraaya svaahaa'*. According to this, the offering should go to Indra, but the fruit of the offering comes to the person who makes the offering. Indra Devta does not get anything, because the rule is that the fruit comes to the giver, not to the one to whom the offering is made. Now, if we are to get the fruit, why is the Devta's name taken at all?

The thing is, we are puny humans, whereas the Devtas – like the Agni Devta, Vayu Devta, Indra Devta – are great. When we give an ahuti considering the Devtas to be the bhoktas, the karta (who has the subtle ego of giving the ahuti) feels one with the bhokta, and the bhokta feels one with the karta. That means, instead of offering oblations to the puny *yajamaana* (the person who makes the oblation) we offer it in the name of the great Devtas. It is we who will receive it in the forms of Agni, Vayu, and other Devtas. That being the case, the best point is that the *antaryaamee* (He, who abides in all hearts) of the Devtas who are the bhoktas, and the antaryaamee of the karta, is one. In fact, neither am I a karta, nor am I a bhokta. It is the Ishwara who is both the karta and the bhokta.

Therefore, the oblation made along with the words, '*Idam indraaya, idam na mama* (This belongs to Indra; it is not mine)' is not only for the karta who gives, but also for Indra Devta. The one who is in the form of the karta who offers the oblation is also in the form of Indra as the bhokta; and He who is the karta in the form of Indra is also the bhokta in the form of the yajamaana. Therefore, apply your mind to the advice of the Gita regarding the Yagya.

Bhoktaaram yagyatapasaam sarvalokamahe`shvaram,

Suhridam sarvabhootaanaam gyaatvaa maam shaantimricchati.

(5. 29)

(My bhaktas know that I am the bhokta of all Yagyas and tapas; the Ishwara of all rulers, and the well-wisher of all beings. They know that I am unselfish and compassionate, and I love all beings. Since they know this to be My essence, they obtain peace.)

The Parameshwara is the karta-bhokta of all the Yagyas and tapa we do; It is He who inspires us and abides in our heart as the karta. It is His power that enables us to lift our hand and do any work. Our tongue speaks because of His Grace. He is in the form of Indra and the other Devtas. The sun and the moon move at His command. The sea keeps to its boundaries at His command. It is He who keeps the earth firm. The Yagyas and tapa in our life are done by Him and His power; and He is also the one who gets the fruit of our good deeds.

I will tell you a little story. There was a Sethji. He built a beautiful house. He also built a beautiful garden that was open to the public. He made arrangements for free distribution of food and water for the poor. One day, he was walking in his garden, when he saw an animal wandering round. Afraid that the animal would damage the plants, he hit it with his walking stick. The animal dropped dead.

The story says that the *hatyaa* (slaughter personified) appeared before the Sethji, accusing him of the sin of killing. The Sethji had some knowledge of Vedanta. 'I have not done the hatyaa,' he said. 'It was the stick that killed it.'

'I am not responsible for the killing,' pleaded the stick. 'The hand that moved me is responsible for it.'

'Indra is the Devta who gives me the power to move,' said the hand.

Hatya went to Indra.

'Brahmaji is the master of all minds,' said Indra. 'The urge to hit the animal came into the mind, and that caused the animal's death. So, the Hatya should be attached to Brahmaji.'

When Hatya went to Brahmaji, he said, 'Vishnu is the Master of all beings. Everything happens at His will, so go and attach yourself to Him.'

Hatya went to Vishnu Bhagwan. 'O Hatya, wait awhile, 'said Vishnu Bhagwan. 'We will go to Sethji.'

Vishnu Bhagwan assumed the form of an old Brahmin and went to Sethji. He began to shower blessings, even before Sethji bowed down to Him. It is written in our Shastras that if a Brahmin blesses a person who does not bow down, the blessing hits him like a thunderbolt, because at that moment, he does not remain a Brahmin, he becomes a flatterer. A blessing should only be given to someone who bows down.

Sethji was very pleased to be praised. Kalidas has written that everybody is pleased with the person who praises them. '*Stotram kasya na tushtyate*`.' Vishnu, in the garb of a Brahmin, said, 'Sethji, was this house built by you?'

'Yes, Maharaj, by your Grace, I built this house.'

'And did you also create this beautiful garden?'

'Yes, Maharaj, by your Grace, I collected flowering plants from different places. I also started the distribution of free food and water for the needy.'

As they strolled around, they came to the dead animal lying there. The Brahmin asked Sethji who had killed the animal. 'It died by its own destiny,' replied Sethji.

Still in the garb of a Brahmin, Vishnu Bhagwan said, 'It was you who did all the good things, but you put the blame on destiny when it comes to killing the animal! The animal died because you hit it with your stick! Hatya, attach yourself to Sethji.' Hatya attached herself to Sethji and the Brahmin vanished.

The meaning of this little story is that people take the credit for good things and shove the blame on others when they do something wrong. 'It is the body, mind and senses that are responsible for the paapa,' they say. 'I am the unattached Atma; I am the Brahman.'

Paapa does not leave such hypocrites. They have to bear the consequences of their actions sooner or later. A person's viewpoint, his Gnan, should be that he is not the karta of any Yagya in his life. The karta is the Ishwara who abides in all hearts. It is He who is the karta,

and it is He who prompts the good actions in our life. He is also the bhokta who gets the fruit. Use the Gnan of the Brahman to remove your 'I'. Only then will your actions be free of worldly motivations. Only then will they be in keeping with what is right and proper. However, don't take the punya of your good deeds, and don't take the sukha that is their fruit. Then you will see that your life is filled with *shaanti* (peace).

You may say, 'If we don't work, what will we eat? And, if we don't get food, how can we do any work?' That is a valid question, but life is more than just eating and working. There is an excellent object in both working and eating, and that is called the Parameshwara, who is the Ishwara of all beings. He alone abides in all beings. That Parameshwara abides in your heart. He has love for all beings. He inspires all beings, and showers Grace on them. He is a well-wisher of all beings – *'suhridam sarvabhootaanaam (6. 29)'*. Bhagwan's heart has immense benevolence.

Listen to a story. There was a Raja who had no children. One day he visited one of the schools he had built. The Principal showed him round, introducing the good students. The Raja was particularly impressed by the intelligence and personality of one boy. He asked the Principal about the boy's background. He was told that the boy was an orphan. He had no means of support, but since he was exceptionally bright, the Principal and teachers pooled in to support him and help him go through school. The Raja said that henceforth, he would pay all expenses and that the boy should be given the best education. He resolved to make this boy his heir, but told no one of his decision.

The young man completed his education. He turned out to be a fine young man, strong, healthy, intelligent and handsome, with all the virtues. The Raja sent his officers to bring the youth to Court. 'Come, sit beside me,' he told the young man. The youth was frightened to hear such a command. He folded his hands respectfully and said, 'No, Maharaj, I cannot sit on the same level as you.' He had no knowledge about the Raja's deep love for him.

The meaning of this story is that we are like that orphan in our belief that we have nobody to look after us, make us competent, and provide all we need. However, the Parameshwara always looks after us and showers His love on us.

There is an episode in the Bhagwat called the 'Puranjana Upakhyana'. It is about a man called Puranjan. It explains that the Ishwara is our unknown, true friend. We don't recognize Him, but He cares for us

and always arranges things for our ultimate benefit. As soon as we come to know of this invisible form of His, peace comes into our life – *'Gnaatvaa maam shaantimricchati (5. 29).'*

Now, understand the essence of Yagya, and see how the jeeva (Atma attached to a body) does Yagya. You must observe yourself. Do you give anything to the people you meet, or not? Does your coming bring any comfort or pleasure to others? Do people feel happy when they hear you approach? When someone's eyes meet yours, does it make him feel good or not? Does your speech give pleasure to those to whom you speak?

If yes, your life is filled with Yagya. The goodwill in your heart spreads subtle vibrations that spread peace and happiness. Make every action of yours a Yagya, so that not only humans, but even animals, birds and all beings become happy. Make sure that you tread gently on the earth; the earth is pained when you stamp your feet. Make your bed carefully so that dust does not get in the eyes of the person standing there. Don't sit with a bump that may break your chair.

When you do everything with gentleness and care, it is also a Yagya. There is a book called 'Buddhacharya' that describes how a person afflicted by lust, anger, delusions greed or longing behaves. The book describes how these people walk, talk, and look, the tone of their voice and the expression on their face. A person's behavior reveals all these things. Yagya is how you behave, how you place your feet, and how you talk. It is how you move your hands and how you smile. The loving expression on your face is a Yagya. When all your actions become a Yagya, your life becomes filled with sweetness, just as the air is filled with fragrance when you do a ritual Yagya. *Madhuvaataa ritaayate` madhu ksharanti sindhavah.* Therefore, may your life have the sweetness of honey. May your nights be filled with sweetness, your days be filled with sweetness, the air be sweet for you, and even the dust particles be sweet for you. When every cell and follicle of your body becomes filled with Yagya, and every moment of your life is filled with Yagya, you will have nothing but happiness in your life. This is why Bhagwan has told us in the Gita, that we should recognize Him –

Aham kraturaham yagyah svadhaahamahamaushadham,

Mantrohamahame`vaajyamahamagniraham hutam.

Pitaahamasya jagato maataadhaataa pitaamahah,

Ve`dyam pavitramomkaaram riksaama yajure`va cha.

(9. 16 – 17)

Whose sunlight is it? It comes from the sun. The light emitted by the sun is a form of Yagya. It is the Ishwara's Yagya, and it goes on without a break. The sweetness of the five elements is gathered up in the sun, and showered upon the earth as light and heat. It showers down in the form of rain, and is drawn up as vapor. The Ishwara gathers up the effulgence because He is the form of Yagya – *'aham krituraham yagyah.'*

The Shrauta-Samarta ritual Yagyas are called 'kritu'. The Yagyas done with a formal resolve are called 'laukik' Yagyas. The Balivaishvadeva (daily feeding of a cow, dog, crow, mendicant and unexpected guest) done by you is a Yagya. The pancha Mahayagyas (the great Yagya of five parts) done daily, includes studying the Shastras, making offerings to the Devtas and manes, offering hospitality to unexpected guests, and casting food for insects. May your life be filled with the Yagyas of good resolves. The 'Purusha Sukta' in the Vedas describes the *viraata purusha* (the embodied spirit that abides in all beings) that creates all Creation. This Virat is also the Agni (ritual fire) and He is also the Mantra. He is the ghee (rarified butter) that is poured into the fire, and He is also the Brahmin who conducts the Yagya. He is the action of giving. The fruit of the Yagya is also the Virat; so is the obtaining of Swarga (Heaven), etc. The Yagya is the conclusion of the Yagya. The Yagya is worshipped through the Yagya. The Shrimad Bhagwat has a whole chapter on the Purusha Sukta. It explains that the Virat Purusha is also a form of the Universal Spirit. The seed, mantra, tantra (accumulation) are all His forms. The Brahmin who conducts the ritual is His form, and the *yajamaana* (the person doing the Yagya) is also a form of the same Virat Purusha. Therefore, it is said that bhaktas worship Him through *e`katve`na prithaktve`na bahudhaa vishvatomukham* (every mouth in this world is His mouth). If asked, 'You are one, then how is Your Yagya done in so many forms?' Bhagwan says, 'I am sarva-svaroopa. I am the Shrauta-Smarta Yagyas, and I am the worship of ancestors. I am also the daily Yagya done in your homes, and the food you eat.'

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan VI

The Sama Veda has a *se`tugaana*. A setugaan is that, which acts as a *se`tu*; a bridge. Your life has four walls that keep you confined. What are they? They are *ashraddhaa* (lack of faith), *asatya* (falsehood), *lobha* (greed), and *krodha* (anger). They are described as the walls of a prison. They prevent your progress.

Ashraddhayaa shraddhaam, asatye`na-satyam, akrodhe`na krodham, adaane`na daanam se`tum stara dustaraan, se`tum stara dustaraan.

(Overcome ashraddha with *shraddhaa* (faith), use *akrodha* – lack of anger – to overcome krodha; and overcome lobha by doing daan. These are the bridges that will carry you out of your prison.)

There is a story in the Vedas, that once the Devtas, Daityas (Demons) and humans went to Prajapati (Brahmaji, the Creator). 'You are our elder. You are aged and wise. Please give us some *upade`sha* (counsel).

Brahmaji said, 'Da, da, da.' In earlier times, people did not give elaborate sermons to explain things. The method of the Vedas is to reply in brief. The listener would then have to give some thought to the matter. That would sharpen his intellect. There is no scope for a person to develop his powers of analysis if the explanation is handed to him on a platter. Elders would keep this in mind, and give short, ambiguous replies. They wanted youngsters to understand indications.

After some time, Brahmaji called the Daityas. 'My dear children,' he said, 'what did you understand from my brief answer?'

'We have understood your meaning, Maharaj,' said the Daityas. 'We are prone to anger and hatred, so you counseled us to show *dayaa* (mercy). We should be more compassionate.'

Brahmaji called the Devtas next. 'Devtas, when I said "Da", did you understand my indication?'

'Yes, Maharaj,' replied the Devtas. 'We have understood your counsel. We are filled with lust and a craving for sensual pleasures. By saying "Da," you indicated that we should do *damana* – we should restrain our senses. We should curtail uncontrolled indulgence.'

Brahmaji then called the humans and asked that they had understood. 'We have understood your advice,' they said. 'We are filled with avarice. Neither Devtas nor Daityas hoard things the way we do. Your indication was that we should do daan, to overcome our tendency to accumulate.'

Brahmaji confirmed that they had all understood his indication correctly. Daityas need to control anger, Devtas need to control lust and humans need to control greed. That is why daan is a special Dharma for human beings.

It is essential that a human being does not feel satisfied by just his own meals; he should feel satisfaction after feeding others. No matter how much a person accumulates, everything is left behind at the end. That is why the Shruti (Vedic verse) says, *'Tasmaat daanam paramam vadanti* – daan is the highest Dharma.' If the one who does daan is intelligent, he can make himself pavitra (pure) by doing daan.

People purify themselves by doing a Yagya, using water, doing meditation, and obtaining Gnan. In the same way, daan is purifying when done by the right method. An intelligent donor not only purifies himself, he becomes a purifying factor; he becomes *paavan*. Paavan means that not only is he pure, he also makes others pure. *'Paavanaani maneeshinaam (18. 5).'* However, daan is purifying only when done intelligently. When daan is done foolishly, it gives rise to pride and vanity. Daan has great power, but in general people don't know much about daan. Even those who do daan regularly are seldom knowledgeable about its various aspects. To do daan is good, but one should know the method of doing daan, the purpose of daan, and what it should contain. A lawyer has to work under a senior lawyer, to be a really good lawyer. It is the same with a doctor or a Pundit. In daan, however, people never learn how it should actually be done.

I tell you at the outset – listen to the greatness about daan from me, but please don't offer to give me daan! My brother, He who gives you, also gives me. It is the same One who sends things to your house – there is only one *daataa* (donor). It is not as though you have a close relationship with Him than I have.

I will give you a glimpse of the description of daan that is given in our

Shastras. Before doing daan, the daataa should have two qualities. One is shraddha, and the other is shakti. Daan done with shraddha becomes a Yagya. If you do charity without having any respect for the person to whom you give, your daan will yield no fruit; neither in this life nor after death. It does not even purify your antahkaran, because ashraddha is an impurity of the antahkaran. It is not proper to give daan to someone who you think is not a good person. Whoever you give daan to, give with a feeling that you are giving to Bhagwan. Think that Bhagwan has come in this form, to accept this from you. Thus, there should be the capacity to give, and faith in the person to whom you give. Regarding the ability to give, the Manusmriti says that a man should have the means to support himself and his dependents for three years, and only then should he do daan. It is not proper if he does daan while his people suffer penury.

People often use the excuse of a Yagya to compel their staff to put in extra work. 'We are having a Yagya. You should also contribute by working more,' they say. 'You will get the fruit of the ritual.' They do not compensate their staff for the extra work. That is not proper. If you make your staff do extra work, you should pay them for it.

You may have heard this amusing story. One man's salary was cut because his company was going through a funds crunch. He told his cook to spend less on food. The cook gave him dry rotis to eat, but applied ghee on his own rotis. 'What are you doing?' asked the man. 'Sir, your salary has been cut, mine is the same,' he replied.

A Yagya should be done without imposing on those who are dependent on you. It is the same regarding daan. Evaluate your means, and your shraddha, because both are vital, before you do daan. After that, think about the feeling with which you do daan.

What is the purpose of your daan? Is it done to purify your antahkaran, or is it to obtain wealth? One Seth realized that people had come to know of his losses and were thinking of withdrawing their loans incase he became bankrupt. He made a public announcement that he would spend a crore (ten million) rupees and build a Mandir. People began to say that he must have a lot of wealth to spend so much on building a temple. They did not withdraw their loans and he was able to tide over his financial crisis.

So, examine your intention. Amongst Brahmins, when there is an occasion for doing daan, we tend to give the daan to our married sisters, daughters or aunts. 'After all, they are also Brahmins,' we say. However this is not Dharma daan.

A Seth was present in a large meeting, when the principal of a girls' college came up and tied a rakhi (a silken cord tied by a sister to her brother on the day of Raksha Bandhan) on his wrist. 'You have become my sister,' said the Seth. 'Tell me, what should I give you?'

'I don't want anything for myself,' said the lady. 'You are my brother and I am your sister. However, my college is always short of funds, so please give a donation of five thousand rupees to the college.' The Seth had to agree. Later, he lamented bitterly that he had to give away so much money to keep up his social image. This is called '*lajjaa*' daan; daan done to save embarrassment.

There is also 'harsha' daan – daan that is done on happy occasions. When a person gets a son, or an unexpected piece of luck, he gives daan to share his happiness.

Another daan is daan given out of fear. This is called 'bhaya daan'. 'He will harm me unless I give him something. He controls gangsters, and will arrange a strike in my factory, because he is a Trade Union leader.' When fear is the criteria for the daan, it is bhaya daan.

Once, I was invited to the house of a Seth in Bombay. His mill had been closed for many months, so I asked him what the position was. 'Oh, the mill is doing very well,' he said. I asked how the strike had been settled. 'I allotted some machines to the Trade Union leader,' he explained. 'I told him that he would be given the profits made by the products of those machines. Since then I have had no labor trouble whatsoever.'

In the same way, there is *kaama daan* – daan given to satisfy desire. I know that wealthy businessmen give huge sums of money to beautiful heroines. They even give them a department to manage. This is daan given for the fulfillment of lust.

The fact is that shraddha is very important in daan. You read in the Gita:

Daatavyamiti yaddaanam deeyate`nupakaarine`,

De`she` kaale` cha paatre` cha taddaanam saatvikam smritam.

(17. 20)

(When a person does daan with the feeling that it is his duty, and

gives to a suitable person, at the right time and place, without expecting anything in return, it is called a Sattvik daan.)

This shloka tells us to keep in mind the place, time, and person when doing daan. Where the person is concerned, it applies to the one who gives as well as to the one who receives. The one who gives should have the means to give and also shraddha; and the one who receives should see the quality of the daan. It is not that he accepts anything and everything.

There was a Mahatma at Rishikesh. A Seth from Bombay had gone there on a pilgrimage. He went to the Mahatma and gave him a shawl. 'Seth,' said the Mahatma, 'I endure the heat as well as the cold here. I am very happy here. I do not need a shawl.'

'Maharaj,' said the Seth, 'I am not giving the shawl because you need it. I am giving it because of my own need. I have heard that if I give a shawl to a Mahatma here, I will get a hundred shawls when I go to Swarga after death. I am merely increasing my own good fortune.'

The Mahatma was silent for a while. When the Seth got up to leave, he said, 'Seth, I accept your debt of a hundred shawls. Take one from me now. I will give you ninety nine more when we meet after death.'

Thus, the one who accepts daan should see the feeling with which the daan is made. Is the daan given with the right motive and feeling? Is the man's wealth earned honestly? The one who takes daan should have some knowledge about the background of the person who is doing the daan, and the person who gives should have some knowledge about the person to whom he does daan. Nobody becomes eligible for daan by just being intelligent or learned; it is essential that the person is a *sadaachaaree* – an upright, decent person. No matter how intelligent a person may be, he is not entitled to give or receive, if he lacks morals and decency. *'Paatra'* (appropriate recipient) means support. *Patanaat traayate*` - that, which saves us from falling, is called a paatra. For example, we pour milk into a paatra (vessel), and the vessel keeps the milk from being spilt and wasted. The wealth we have should not be wasted on wrong things. It should go to a paatra where it will be well used. Daan given to an eligible person saves you from downfall, and a person who is eligible for daan is called the paatra. The one who gives daan and the one who accepts daan should both be upright and ethical. We should not accept the daan if we know that the person giving it is immoral, an adulterator, cheat, gambler, or drunkard. After the consideration of who is eligible for giving and receiving, comes the eligibility of what is given.

It is important to consider the object that is given. When I go to Ahmedabad, I enjoy watching the scene of Seths giving daan. They take out a wad of notes from their pocket – they normally carry about five thousand rupees with them – and separate the hundred rupee notes, fifty rupee notes, ten rupee notes and five rupee notes. They then peel off two one rupee notes. They rub them with their thumb and forefinger to make sure that they are only two, and not more, and then they give the daan. The one who gives daan is also to be considered.

I had gone to Badrinath in 1948. My companions and I found that no rooms were available in any of the Dharamshalas (charitable guest houses) because one Seth had booked them all for himself and his retinue. We went to the Marwari Seth and asked him to accommodate us for the night, since it was very cold and we had nowhere to stay. He told his people to vacate one room for us, and cook puri-saag (fried unleavened bread and vegetables) for us. The cook thought that we were mere beggars and felt no need to prepare the puris nicely. However, the Seth's daughter came to serve us. She flung down the plate of thick puris angrily. 'Am I to serve such thick puris to our guests?' she demanded. After that, we got excellent puris! This means that the one who gives should give that, which is appropriate to his status.

There was another incident in Bombay. A Sadhu came to the office of a Seth I know. The Seth was irritated at the intrusion. 'Is there no clerk here? He demanded. A clerk came running. 'Give this man a coin and tell him to go,' said the Seth.

'Look, Seth,' said the Sadhu. 'I have not come for money. I have come to tell you something that is important for you. And that is, you have six months more in this world. Now, I will leave you. I have nothing to take from you and nothing more to give you.'

The Seth got up hastily and caught the Sadhu's feet. 'Maharaj! Where are you going? Stay a while; have some fruits or refreshments.' Sethji began to speak sweet words. The Mahatma said, 'Seth, you do not take Bhagwan's name. Make a pledge today, that you will chant His name every day. *Hare` Rama hare` Rama, Rama Rama hare` hare`; hare` Krishna, hare` Krishna, Krishna Krishna hare` hare`.'* The Seth made the pledge. 'Very well,' said the Mahatma. 'Now you won't die after six months. You will live longer.'

The meaning of this story is that the one who does daan should not look down on the person to whom he gives. What is given is not

important; what is important is the feeling with which the daan is done.

Also important are the place and time of doing daan. You should arrange for the things that people need. Food should be arranged where food is scarce, and water should be arranged where there is a scarcity of water. Medicines should be provided where they are not easily available, and woolens should be given to the poor who live in cold climates. In earlier times, people used to take sewing needles and thread, to give in daan, when they went to Badri-Kedar, since they were not easy to get in those remote regions. There are many items that are suitable for giving in daan.

Who should daan be given to? Students are entitled to get daan. The brahmacharis (celibate students who study the Vedas) who lead lives of austerity should definitely be given food and clothing. Daan should not be given to unprincipled lazy louts who do no study, but gamble, steal and cheat, and don the garb of a Sanyasi to get food and money. The Dharma Shastras say that if such ineligible people receive daan in any village, the entire village deserves to be penalized.

Some daan is barren; it bears no fruits. Some daan yields a small return, even if it is substantial. That is when the daan is publicized and the person receives public acclaim. Then the daan gets scattered and weakened. The fruit of daan should be internal, like happiness, peace, and purification of the antahkaran. It should go to the essence after death. If it becomes external, its power is reduced or lost.

You will receive as much as you give. Giving shoes, clothes, umbrellas, or grain is not considered a big daan. These are small daans. The big daans are *go-daan* (giving a cow), *kanyaa-daan* (giving a daughter's hand in marriage), giving gold, a house, or donating blood. Giving education is considered bigger than any of these.

I know a Seth in Bombay who had ruined his liver by drinking excessively. One day his doctor phoned me and asked me to go to his place. He wanted me to convince the man to give up drink, as it would kill him if he continued to drink. I went to his house. He had nine dogs and a team of servants to look after them. The Seth ate meat and so did the dogs. Ultimately, the Seth died because he could not give up drinking. The money spent on the upkeep of the dogs could have educated at least three or four youngsters.

There is one daan that we, Sadhus give. You think that you give a great daan when you donate a large sum of money. The daan we give

is *abhay-daan* – the daan of fearlessness. We liberate people from the fear of spirits and ghouls, of the malevolent effect of planets, of what the future may bring, of going to Narak, of past wrong doings, and present situations. By giving Atmagnan (knowledge about the Atma), we free them of the fears that haunt them. This is a pledge taken by every Sanyasi, and it is a daan. *'Abhayam sarvabhoote`bhyo dadaamye`tad vratam mama* - today I take a vow that I will not induce fear in any. If anyone has fear, I will liberate him from his fear.' When a man takes the vows of renunciation he makes this pledge. The Shastras say that there is no daan greater than the abhay daan.

When daan is done, the six levels of fruit must be kept in mind. These are *dush* (bad) *fala* (fruit), *nish* (no) *fala, heena* (small) *fala, punya* (spiritual merit) *fala, adhika* (extra large) *fala*, and *akshay* (unending) *fala*. What is akshay fala? It is that the antahkaran becomes pure, and the person begins to experience the Paramatma in this very life. There is, of course, the *sarvasya daan*, when people give away all their worldly possessions. I am giving you a brief glimpse of daan, so that you may have some *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions) about the different kinds and levels of daan.

The Gita describes the three kinds of daan – Sattvik (lofty), Rajas (mixed) and Tamas (lowly). It also elaborates on the importance of the time, place and paatra. The Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapurana goes deeper into the subject. When you give daan thinking, 'This is mine and I am giving it to someone,' it is not called daan. The object is contaminated by your feeling of being the owner. Everything belongs to Bhagwan. Everything that exists in Swarga, on this earth, or in space, is created by Bhagwan and is His.

That being the case, what is daan? 'This has always belonged to Bhagwan, but I considered it to be mine. I did not create the diamonds, gold, silver, land, or grains.' Then, what is there that belongs to us? Do we own the five elements, gold, diamonds and pearls? What is it that can be said to be ours? The first mistake we make is in believing that the money is ours. If you accept that everything belongs to Bhagwan, you come to one Satya. Even if you don't feel that a hundred percent is His, remove one unit and give it to someone. But, keep in mind that you are not doing the man any favor; what you give belongs to him too. By giving it, you are getting the benefit of reducing your feeling of possessiveness. The flaw in your antahkaran becomes a little smaller. This is how you are to cleanse your mind of the *moha* (delusion) and *mamataa* (attachment) that sully it. This is how you are to understand , *'Tvadeeya vastu govinda tubhyame`va samarpaye`* - O Bhagwan, I offer You what already

belongs to You.' The Bhagwat says that the object belongs to Bhagwan, and we give it to Him. This point is beautifully clarified in our Dharma Shastras.

Perhaps you know how many *graha* (astrological planets) there are, because astrologers keep talking about them. All these grahas – Rahu, Ketu, Mangal etc – remain in outer space. The people who talk about them have their feet on the ground and look up at the sky. No wonder there is confusion! My brother, look at the ground before you go forward, If you look at the sky as you walk, you are bound to fall into some ditch. It is not good to tell too many tales about what the stars reveal. The grahas are in the sky, but the *duraagraha* (strong urges that lead to harm) like *parigraha* (excessive accumulation), *sangraha* (hoarding), *vigraha* (attachment to physical forms), etc are wicked grahas that stay in the heart. If you remove the grahas in your heart, the grahas of the sky can do you no harm.

Our suffering is caused by the grahas in our heart. Our *aagraha* (strong preferences) for things to be just the way we want – or not to be the way we don't want – create problems. The celestial grahas create problems only for our duragrahas.

What is daan? It is removing our moha and mamata. All the things belong to the Ishwara, right from the time of Creation. You have a false belief that you are the owner. When you give them to someone, you make it obvious that you are obliging him. Daan done in this way gives rise to pride. All these things should be kept in mind when doing daan.

Om Shatih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan VII

The purpose of tapasya is to control the mind and senses, and prevent them from being wayward and sully the antahkaran, or harm others.

The purpose of daan is to benefit others as well as ourselves.

The purpose of Yagya is to distribute what we have accumulated, and bring happiness to all Creation. Devtas are universal forms that benefit all beings. For example, Surya (the sun), Agni (fire), and Vayu (the wind) benefit all beings. It is the same with tapa, daan and Yagya. The universal benefits are split into three parts. Our own benefit is predominant in daan, and rendering service to all creation is predominant in Yagya. Therefore, tapasya, daan and Yagya should be understood properly.

In tapasya, the movement is from the external to the internal. The purpose of tapasya is not to become thin or endure hunger; tapasya means controlled speech and controlled action. The Gita says,

'De`vadvijagurupraagya poojanam'* (worship of the Devtas, the Brahmins, the Guru and the wise) is physical tapa. *'Anudve`gakaram vaakyam' (speech that does not cause agitation) is verbal tapa, and *'manah prasaadasaumyatvam'* (remaining serene and pleasant) is mental tapa. It also says, *'Bhaava sanshuddhi'* (purity of feeling), which is a mental tapa, and is considered the greatest Dharma. Bhava sanshuddhi is having no ill-will for anyone at all.

This is the secret of Dharma given in the Mahabharata. Only a person who is free of ill-will can understand the essence of Dharma. A person who has true knowledge about Dharma never considers anyone to be a *paapee* (sinner). If your antahkaran is filled with universal benevolence, consider it to be filled with Dharma. A paapi sees *paapa* (sin) everywhere. This is the characteristic of a paapi's antahkaran. The other person may not be at all a bad person, but our heart may still be filled with suspicion of his being a paapi. Our feeling emerges from our heart and envelopes the other person. As a result, we see paapa in him, and believe him to be a paapi, because nobody sins publicly and we can never really know what is in another person's mind.

It is said that the great Sanskrit poet, Bharavi, went to the Court of a King, leaving behind his pregnant wife. They were extremely poor. They lived in a thatched hut that did not even have proper doors. Even food was scarce.

Bharavi stayed at the Court for twenty years. One day, the King asked him whether he had a home and family. 'Yes, I have a wife, and we have a small hut,' he replied. The King gave him a horse and some money and told him to go home.

It was night when Bharavi reached his village. He went into the hut and saw a young man sleeping beside his wife. He drew his sword to kill them, but before he could use it, his eyes fell on what he had written on the wall so many years ago. *'Sahasaa viddheeta na kriyaamavive`kah paramaapadaam padam,'* meaning, one should never act impulsively. Lack of discrimination invites great trouble. Bharavi's hand was halted. He woke his wife and the man sleeping next to her. It was his own son.

A man had to go to another land. He was worried about leaving his wife alone. He went to the most highly respected man in the village and asked him to look after his wife.

'I will agree on one condition,' said the gentleman. 'You must tell your

wife, in my presence, that she should do whatever I say, whether it seems a good thing or a bad thing.' The man had full confidence in the man's goodness and told his wife she was to obey him in everything.

After the man went, the gentleman told the wife, 'My antahkaran will be sullied if I have any doubts about you. So, please sleep on my bed.' The lady slept on one side and the gentleman slept on the other, with a naked sword in-between. When the man returned from his journey, he saw his wife and the gentleman sleeping on one bed. His mind was filled with suspicion. His first impulse was to kill them both. When he went closer, he saw the sword between them. When he woke them up, the gentleman said, 'My brother, your wife is absolutely chaste. I made her sleep on my bed to safeguard my mind from having any doubts about her purity.'

Therefore, bhava sanshuddhi is needed to protect our mind from being suspicious about others. The other person may be a very decent, upright person, but if we think that he is a crook or an immoral person, we don't want him to live in our village. But, when your thoughts are focused on anyone negatively, you keep that person in your heart, and your antahkaran gets sullied. Even if the other person has no real faults in his character, the faults you believe him to have glimmer in your antahkaran. The Shrutis describe tapasya as, *'Aalochanam satyam gunaamayam tapah',* meaning, tapasya is filled with Gnan. A proper understanding of Satya is called tapa, whereas the Yagya is a form of Bhagwan's essence. Yagya means yajan – performing a sacrifice. Yajan means worship. Are you doing a Yagya, or are you doing a worship? Generally, the one you worship comes and sits in your heart. The word Yagya means Bhagwan and it also means an action. Therefore, Bhagwan is worshipped through a Yagya, and the Yagya is worshipped through the action of doing the Yagya. *'Yagye`na yagyamayajanta de`vaah'* – when we do a Yagya, its worship form is present in our antahkaran on one side, and Bhagwan is present in the center of the circle of the Yagya. Our antahkaran is filled with the Yagya. *Aaaradhanaa* (worship) is not possible without an *aaraadhya* (object of worship) and a Yagya is not possible without the *yajaneeya* (the one who is worshipped through the Yagya).

So, let our heart worship the Paramatma continuously. That means, all that we see, hear, say, and do etc should be for Bhagwan. We offer up to Him, the pleasures we get when we see something beautiful or eat something delicious, because *'Hridde`she`rjuna tishthati (18. 61)* – I am seated in all hearts, Arjuna'. Bhagwan abides in our heart. The Shruti says that Bhagwan is, Himself, filled with Yagya. Therefore, any effort we make is called 'sadhan' only if carries us to the Paramatma. A

sadhana is that which takes us to *poornataa* (totality; wholeness). It makes us fulfilled. It does not let us remain incomplete.

Now, I will tell you about daan once again. What is daan? The meaning of daan is to be established in Satya – *'Yagye` tapasi daane` cha sthitih saditi chochyate`.'* Being in the state of Yagya is Sat, being in a state of tapasya is Sat, and being in a state of daan is Sat. However, it is not a state of Sat when we do a Yagya and feel proud of being a Yagnik (a person who does a Yagya). It is not a state of Sat when we do some tapasya and feel proud of being a tapasvi (one who does tapasya). And, it is not a state of Sat when we do daan and feel proud of being a daani. That is why the Gita says that Yagya, daan and tapa are forms of Sat. If these actions do not place you in the Sat – if they lead to your developing a subtle pride of being an individual who does good deeds – then, your state becomes the state of an individual who is separate from the totality. Then, neither the Yagya, nor the tapa, nor the daan were of the right kind. Their fruits were destroyed after giving small returns like subtle pride and public acclaim. *'Yagyo daanam tapashchaiva paavanaani maneeshinaam (18. 5)',* the word 'paavan' here means the absence of both *agnaana* (lack of Gnan) and *abhimaana* (pride).

What is the biggest paapa in life? It is explained in our Shastras, but I do not want to talk about it to a point where people find it difficult to comprehend. This is a strange delusion. The greatest paapa is, *'Yonyathaa pratipadyate`',* meaning, a human being is something other than what he believes himself to be. He is a thief, but he hides it, and claims to be a Sadhu. Similarly, a human being is the Sacchidananda (the Brahman whose essence is Sat = existence, Chit = consciousness, and Ananda = bliss), but due to agnana he believes himself to be a sinner or a pious person, a diseased person, an individual who goes to Swarga or Narak, is happy or sad. The biggest paapa is to forget your essence and get engrossed in the objects of the external world.

Money comes from outside, but a man says, 'I am rich.' In the same way he says, 'I have become the owner of land. I have become a highly respected member of society. I have become powerful.' He forgets his essence and develops pride for his worldly possessions. This pride is the greatest paapa. Pride and agnana should be removed simultaneously. When a person cultivates only a feeling of being free of pride, it does not endure. It is only when a person obtains Atmagnan that he really is free of pride. This is called being established in Satya. So, by all means, do Yagya, daan, and tapa, but don't allow pride to come into your heart.

There is a story in the 'Vishnu Dharmottara'. A man was doing tapasya under a tree, when a bird's dropping fell on his head. He looked up angrily and the bird dropped dead. 'Oh, I have attained *siddhi* (supernatural powers),' he said.

The tapasvi went to get *bhikshaa* (begged food). The lady delayed a little in coming out in answer to his call, and he rebuked her sharply. 'I am not a bird, to be burnt to ashes by your anger,' she said. She made a pestle remain suspended in mid-air while she went to get rotis to give him. The tapasvi folded his hands humbly. 'Mother, please tell me about Dharma,' he said.

'There is a man who sells meat,' she replied. 'Go to him. He will tell you what Dharma is.' The devoted wife shattered the tapasvi's pride in his power, because she had attained even greater power by doing her duty faithfully.

Therefore, if a Yagya, tapa, or daan creates pride in you, there is some flaw in the way they are done. The fact is, all daan is already done. Nobody brings anything when they come into this world, and nobody takes anything with them when they leave it. What, then, is ours? The essence of daan is to be free of the feeling of being the owner of anything. We found something on the road, picked it up, and began to feel that it belongs to us and that we are giving it. Neither has anyone brought anything nor will they take anything when they die. Kabir says that nothing except a few dry sticks will go with us at the end.

Therefore, my brother, the conveniences you enjoy are like the facilities in a hotel. You use them during your stay at the hotel and leave them behind when you move on. The biggest daan is to know that nothing in this world belongs to us. That is why *shareera-daana* (the daan of the body) is a part of the last ritual.

There is another angle to be considered. Can you fulfill the needs of the whole world? Whether it is medicine, clothes, food or water – can you supply them all? Nobody can meet the needs of the world. Daan is done because we need to do daan. We must evaluate out ability to give, and the strength of our shraddha.

It was, most probably, in 1959, when Premananda Dada was with me, just as Prabuddhananda is with me now. We had gone to the house of an elderly lady. When we were about to leave, she brought some money to give to Dada. He explained that we did not need any money, because a man had been sent to escort us, and he would take care of all the expenses of the journey. Hearing this, her eyes filled with tears. 'Dadaji,' she said, 'May the day never come that I give anything because you need it! The need to give is mine. Unless I give you something, I will be pained that I let you leave without giving anything. So, Dadaji, please take something to save me from this sorrow.' She pressed money into Dadaji's hand. You see, it is a feeling some people have, that they cannot bear it if they don't give.

Therefore, it should be our need to give. We should give as much as we can, and give with shraddha. Daan is said to be of four kinds – *dhruva daana, aajasrika daan, kaamya daan,* and *naimittika daan.* Dhruva daan is to donate money for a project that will continue to benefit all – like a well, lake, or park. The resolve should be for all beings to benefit; not only humans. Even birds and animals and insects and worms should get the benefit. Ajasrika daan is arranging for daan to be given daily, like the distribution of free food and drinking water on a daily basis. The third kind of daan is kamya daan, like giving something to a Minster to get some favors. I will not give any names, but I know that certain people have a separate pouch. When people put something in that pouch, their work gets done smoothly. A clerk who works in a High Court told me, 'We have the power to hold up a case, unless we are well pleased. We can ensure that the case is not sent up to the Judge for even ten years.' Thus, daan done to get a benefit is called kamya daan. It can be to obtain Swarga, win a case, get a son or daughter, a high position, or a license for some lucrative business. The fourth is naimittik daan, which is done as a return for a favor. 'Take your dues for the work you did for me.' There are many forms of daan that are given on certain specific days, like the *e`kaadashee* (the eleventh date of the lunar month), *poornimaa* (the full moon), *amaavasyaa* (no moon), etc. All these four types of daan have three levels – Saatvik, Rajasik and Tamasik.

A doctor went to see a patient. He spent an hour examining the

patient and asking about the symptoms in detail. He made a bill of one thousand rupees. The head of the family said, 'Doctor, you have spent just one hour with the patient. How can you charge one thousand rupees for one hour?'

'I will amend the bill,' said the doctor. He tore up the old bill and made a new one. He put his fees at ten rupees, and put down nine hundred and ninety nine rupees for his years of study and the use of his knowledge. The man had to pay a thousand rupees. You would have understood the meaning of this story. You should give some thought to whether you give adequate compensation to the Brahmins who do your rituals for their knowledge, training, and time.

I will tell you about the Sattvik, Rajas, and Tamas kinds of daan. When you give daan as a duty, to someone who has not done anything for you, it is a Sattvik daan. When you give something to someone who has rendered you some service, it is a Rajasik daan. Daan done to satisfy some desire, anger, greed, attachment, etc is a Tamas daan.

There was a Punditji. Nobody called him to do a katha (give discourses), so he decided to go to a forest. He saw a Hanumanji temple in the forest. He began to read the Ramcharitmanas to Hanumanji every day.

Shri Ramachandra told Hanumanji, 'This Punditji has been reading the Ramcharitmanas to you for the past six months. Have you arranged for him to get some money, or not? Give him one thousand rupees.'

'Very well, Maharaj,' said Hanumanji. 'The Punditji will receive one thousand rupees tomorrow.' A Seth came into the temple just then. He heard Hanumanji's words and wanted to make a quick profit. He went to the Punditji and said, 'How much *dakshinaa* (monetary gift given to a Brahmin) will you be satisfied with?'

'I get no dakshina here,' replied the Punditji. 'I just come to read the Ramayana to Hanumanji.'

'Let us have an agreement,' suggested the Seth. 'I undertake to give you five hundred rupees. If you get anything more, it will be mine.' The Punditji was delighted, since he had not expected to get anything at all.

The next day, the Seth gave five hundred rupees to the Brahmin and waited for someone to come and give a thousand. He waited till night time, but no one came. Furious at the thought of losing five hundred rupees instead of making a profit, he kicked Hanumanji. His foot got

stuck to the image. Try as he would, he could not free himself.

'Has the Punditji been given one thousand rupees?' Shri Ramachandra asked Hanumanji.

'Maharaj, he has been given five hundred. I will arrange for him to get five hundred more,' replied Hanumanji.

The Hanumanji spoke to the Seth, 'Look, brother,' he said. 'You have already given Punditji five hundred rupees. Give him five hundred more, and I will free your foot. I want this Brahmin to get one thousand rupees.' The Seth had to do a daan of one thousand rupees to save himself. This is called 'sankata daan' – daan given to save one's self.

People tend to talk about the Yagyas, daan, and tapa they do. They also boast about their grasp of the Vedas and the different philosophies like Nyaya, Mimansa, etc. This dissipates the benefits of their acts, because the Shastra does not reveal its true meaning to people who boast about their good deeds and learning.

The Mahabharata has a story about King Yayati. He did so many Yagyas and so much daan that he was given the privilege of sharing Indra's throne. When he died and went to Swarga, Indra greeted him with folded hands and asked him to be seated to his right. Envy is a natural characteristic of the Devtas; Indra resented having to share his throne with a mere mortal.

'Tell me about all the Yagyas, tapa and daan you did, which made you eligible to sit on my throne,' he told Yayati. Yayati began to describe his good deeds. Indra started counting them. When the recital ended, Indra shoved Yayati off the throne because the merit of his good deeds had diminished by his talking about them. Yayati began to fall. He was saved by Satsang (listening to spiritual discourses). His avid desire for the sensual pleasures of Swarga was destroyed by Satsang, and he was liberated. It is one thing to not succumb to desire, and another thing to be free of desire.

There is a story about Vishwamitra and Vasishtha. There was great rivalry between them. Vishwamitra undertook severe asceticism to become a Brahmarshi. He had pride and thought himself eligible for that status, but Vasishtha refused to accept this. They went to Shesha Bhagwan (the thousand headed serpent who bears the weight of the earth in his head), and said, 'Maharaj, please settle our dispute. Which of us is greater?'

‘Vishwamitra, ‘ said Shesha Bhagwan. ‘I have the weight of the earth on my head – how can I give a proper judgment if I am weighed down in this manner? Take the earth on to your head for a while, so I can think about the matter.’ Vishwamitra staked the power of his asceticism, but could not bear the weight of the earth for even one minute.

‘All right, Vasishtha, you try,’ said Shesha Bhagwan.

‘Of all the Satsang I have done in my life,’ said Vasishtha, ‘I stake the fruit of one minute’s Satsang to uphold the earth.’ The earth remained suspended in air, without moving to Vasishtha’s head.

‘Do you still need me to tell you who is greater?’ asked Shesha Bhagwan. ‘The judgment is clear. The power that comes from *sadbhaavanaa* (goodwill), *satsang*, and *sadgnaana* (knowledge about that Sat) cannot be found in anything else.’

We should see the present situation in the light of this story. Most of the people who come to meet me say, ‘Maharaj, my mind is not at peace.’ Don’t think that it is only the poor who say this; people who have great wealth can’t sleep soundly at night without taking sleeping pills. They suffer from endless mental agitation. ‘My brother took so much. My nephew did this. My wife behaves like this,’ and so on. Now, see – why are they so agitated? It is because their wishes are not fulfilled. Their family members don’t do what they want. They think that only they have a mind, no one else has a mind. The husband considers only his preference; he gives no consideration to what his wife wants. The wife considers what she wants; she does not see her husband’s viewpoint. Thus, everybody wants things to be done their way, and the result is lack of peace.

It is possible only for the Ishwara, that whatever He wants will happen. In this world, we all have to adjust, and consider the feelings of other people. Some things will be done the way we want, and we will have to do some things the way others want. The Ishwara abides in all. Unless you do Satsang, the effect of the external world will continue to agitate you; your mind will not be at peace.

I remember an incident that happened long ago. It was before I became a Sanyasi. I used to work in the Editorial department of Kalyan, along with Devdharji Sharma. It was my tongue and his hand that produced the translated Bhagwat published by the Gita Press. I would speak, and he would write. Had our minds not worked in unison, how could such a vast, profound work been completed in just

two months?

It was around the same time that I went to Bombay. In those days, I never kept any money with me. To tell you the truth, I never accepted money from anyone before I became a Sanyasi – not even from people who had been disciples of our clan for generations. A gentleman in Bombay wanted to give me fifty rupees, but I declined. Just see his foolishness – in front of me, he bought cinema tickets worth fifty rupees and distributed them among people who stood on the road. 'If you don't accept money, this is how it will be wasted!' he told me. What I mean to say, is that we should avoid doing foolish things. It is necessary to learn the right way to do daan. Not everyone knows this.

In the same way, tapasya does not mean that you starve yourself. Nor does it mean that you pour ghee and other items into the fire without following the rules of the Yagya. There are rules about everything. When things are done the right way, it gives inner peace. The mind becomes pure, and Bhagwan comes and stays there. Bhagwan is everywhere, anyway, but our eyes are turned away from Him, and that is why we don't see Him. When we turn towards Him, He begins to give us His darshan.

The greatest thing is the *pavitrataa* (purity) of our heart. Then, the scene, '*Yatra yoge`shvarah krishno yatra paartho dhanurdharah (18. 78)'* comes before us clearly. The bow and arrow are in Arjuna's hands, and the reins are in Shri Krishna's hands. The horses are our senses; the reins, our mind. And, when both are guided by Bhagwan, what doubt is there, in Arjuna's using his weapons well? It was this sight that made Sanjay says that Arjuna's victory was certain. The Mahabharata war continued for ten days after the Gita was spoken, but the outcome was clear.

'Tatra shreervijayo bhootirdhruvaaneetirmatirmama (18. 78)'. Arjuna is on the path of Satya. Thus, the Gita's Yagya, daan, and Tapa are meant to purify our heart, and turn us towards Bhagwan.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

VYAVAHARA SHUDDI

(Part II)

ASANGATA

The Brahmasutras do not describe the Brahman with an emphasis on Prakriti (the Ishwara's power of Creation) that has the three *guna* (fluctuating tendencies) of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. In fact, they refute the existence of Prakriti, calling it an assumption. They say that the antahkaran is purified by actions. The Gita accepts the principle of Prakriti with the three gunas, and then establishes that the Atma is unattached to Prakriti, and is one with the Brahman. This was a revolutionary idea, because earlier, the Vedantis refused to accept the three gunas, refuting them altogether. That means, the Sankhya philosophy based on the Shrutis (Vedic verses), considered Prakriti to be an effulgence. They said that Prakriti contains light, water, and grain.

The Vedantis believed in the Upanishads that said that grain is grown by light and water and heat. All bodies have warmth, water and clay. If three things are to be accepted, these are the components of Prakriti, and they are ruled by Shri Krishna.

Mayaadhyakshe`na prakriti sooyate` sacharaacharam,

He`tunaane`na kaunte`ya jagadviparivartate`.

(9. 10)

(O Arjuna, Prakriti gives birth to the entire moving and unmoving world, under My direction. The purpose is to keep the cycle of the world going.)

I will first tell you about gunas, and then about '*gunaa gune`shu vartante`*' (the gunas move among their objects).

A gentleman was walking on the road. He saw a leper lying on the ground. The man's hands and feet had rotted. He was coughing. He had T.B. The gentleman's heart was filled with pity. He lifted the man and took him home, bathed and fed the man, and arranged for medicines for him.

The compassion that wells up when we see someone suffer is called 'druti'. It softens the heart. It makes us want to do something to reduce the suffering of the other person. The gentleman began to fan the leper. Until then, it was a Sattvik vritti (lofty tendency). Then he began to think, 'What a compassionate man I am, to render service to a destitute leper.' The softened heart hardened with pride. Sattva guna is tender, but Rajo guna is hard. Our Atma is reflected properly in the fluidity of Sattva guna, but when the hardness of Rajo guna comes into the mind, the *kartaapana* (feeling of being the doer) prevails. Even this is acceptable to some extent.

The leper spat on the floor. Puss oozed from his wounds. The gentleman was filled with disgust. 'Oh, germs will spread and infect other people. My house will become filthy,' he thought. The gentleman's mind was Sattvik when he brought the man home, it became Rajasik when he felt proud of himself, and it became Tamasik when he felt disgust. This is how feelings change, and the mind fluctuates between the three gunas. This is the *aadhyaatmik* (metaphysical) *parivartan* (change) that goes on in the mind. *'Svabhaavo adhyaatma ucchyate`'* – our nature is called 'adhyatma.'

How do changes come into people's nature? This is something that should be given some thought. *'Gunaa gune`shu vartante`'* and *'indriyaaneendriyaarthe`shu vartante`'* (the senses move according to their own inclinations) has been pointed out repeatedly in the Gita, in different ways. It is useless to say that you are not connected to the things that are done in the world; you need to give some thought to what you want to negate or refute.

Actually, thought should be given to both acceptance and rejection, before accepting either. Anyone who blindly accepts whatever he is told is called a fool. Progress, upliftment and achievements are achieved by giving consideration to what will be best. If you want to see everything that lies between Swarga and Narak, you will have to go everywhere. You will have to see where the lakes are, which region is hilly, and where the land is flat. This *vicharana* (wandering) is called *'vichaara'* (giving thought).

It is the nature of Prakriti to shift and change, so much so that it does not remain static even during *pralaya* (total dissolution). The pulsating of Prakriti during parlay is even; it becomes uneven during *srishti* (Creation). If Prakriti did not pulsate during dissolution, it would not be possible to recreate the world. *'Praakrith – praakritah-spandah.'* There is continuous action in Prakriti – a *spandan* (pulsating). Prakriti and Yoga are both *anaadee* (eternal; without a beginning or end), and

the Parameshwara who rules them is also anadi. *'Prakritim-purusham chaiva viddhyanaadi ubhaavapi (13. 19)'*.

There are three kinds of action in this world. One is *praakrita* (done by Prakriti), the second is *jaiva* (done by the jeeva), and the third is *eeshvareeya* (done by the Ishwara). Prakriti has one kind of activity, the jeeva (Atma attached to an individual body) has one kind of activity, and the Ishwara has one kind of activity. These three kinds of activities keep this world running.

The first effect of Prakriti is the Mahat Tattva – the intelligence in everything. Next come geographical areas, time, and the order of Creation. Then, the separation of different objects, followed by *ahankaara* (the subtle ego of individuality). It is like a person waking up from a deep sleep and remembering, after a while, who he is. After that, he experiences the five *tanmaatraa* (subtle forms of the five elements) – *shabda* (sound) tanmatra, *sparsha* (touch) tanmatra, *rasa* (taste) tanmatra, *gandha* (smell) tanmatra, and *roopa* (appearance) tanmatra.

The ten *indreeya* (five sense organs and five organs of action) are created after that. The sense organs are the ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose; the hands, feet, tongue and two organs of evacuation are the organs of action. After that, the five *vishaya* (objects of the senses) are experienced. Buddhi (the intellect), ahankara, and *mana* (the fourfold mind; subtle body) – these three, the five tanmatras, ten indriyas, and five vishayas are the twenty three *tattva* (essential nature) that make a person the *kartaa* (doer). Prakriti works in the forms of these tattvas, and the one who makes the rules is the Parameshwara.

The jeeva attaches himself to the actions of Prakriti, and believes that it is he who is doing the actions that happen naturally. He connects his sukha-dukha to events and experiences. However, the things that happen have always been happening. Prakriti changes, the Ishwara rules everything, and the jeeva has the pride of being the doer, and getting pleasure or pain. Then he thinks of neither the Ishwara, nor about his Self. He becomes like a blind man. He is trapped in an endless cycle of action and its fruit. When he does something, he feels he is working. He is happy when favorable things happen and sad when they are not to his liking.

A human being gets trapped when he gets attached to anything. I had a friend who was much older than me. He was seventy and I was only twenty years old. He was my father's student, a Kshatriya (of the warrior class), and a non-vegetarian. I had been trying to convince

him for years, that it was not good to eat meat. 'If, at the time of death, you have a desire to eat meat, you will be reborn as a vulture or a dog,' I warned. He was a very learned man. He had written several books, of which some twenty are available even today. He held a high position and was highly respected.

On one occasion he told me, 'Very well; today onward I will not eat meat.' Then, he would get tempted again. He would tell himself that this was the last time he would eat meat, but temptation would overcome him when he saw meat again. At times he would have *nivritti* (withdrawal) and at times he would have *pravritti* (activity).

In the same way, our life alternates between taking the right decision and succumbing to temptation. Karma is in both. It is karma to act wisely, and it is karma to give in to a wrong desire. What we want is that our karma should not remain a karma; it should become Dharma. This is how we traditionally turn karma into Dharma, and give people the *upade`sha* (advice) to become *asanga* (detached). It is not that a person continues to practice adultery, behave unethically, does immoral deeds, eats and drinks whatever he feels like, and says and does whatever he wants. That is not the right way to behave. We can never be free of wrong doing if we succumb to desire indiscriminately, and believe that we are asanga! If we do that, we will have to swing like a pendulum between happiness and sorrow. We will have *raaga* (attachment) for some, and *dve`sha* (hatred) for some. At times we will be in the darkness of ignorance and at times we will get flashes of illumination.

It is for the removal of this see-saw that karma is first turned into Dharma. Dharma has the power to control indiscipline. Bhagwan's Avataras, the Rishi-Munis, and enlightened people – who the Jains call Tirthankaras and the Buddhists call the Buddha – have an exceptional amount of Dharma in them. They are not effected by the *vikaara* (distortions) created by Prakriti. Vikaras fear to touch them. Shri Ram Chandra said, *'Raghuvanshakara sahaja subhaau, mana kupantha paga dharata na kaau.'* It is the nature of those who are born in the lineage of Raghu that not even in a dream do they think of a woman who is not their wife. When Dushyanta saw Shakuntala, he said, 'My mind is an Arya mind. It never goes on the wrong path. It cannot get vikara for a maiden whose lineage is unknown, and yet it desires Shakuntala.'

What a pure mind is Dushyant's! When there is a doubt, the natural inclination of a Satpurusha (a man of righteousness) shows the way. A Satpurusha's mind can be depended upon to tell us what is right. In

the same way, the *guna* (tendencies) of Prakriti are dominated by Sattva in some people, Rajas in some people and Tamas in some people. *'Sattvaat sanjaayate` gnaanam rajaso lobha e`va cha. (14. 17)'* – Sattva gives respect to Gnan, Rajas pushes a person to lobha (greed), and Tamo guna brings indolence and delusion. It is essential to be vigilant. That is why *vishe`sha* (specific) Dharma is accepted in life.

There are four kind of Dharma. The *asaadhaarana* (exceptional) Dharma is present in the Mahapurusha and Avataras. *Vishe`sha* (specific) Dharma is present in people who lead Dharmik lives. Leading a Dharmik life uplifts a person; *vaasanaa* (desire) leads to downfall. Avid desire suppresses the loftier tendencies, and pushes a person to base actions. *Anushaasana* (following the rules) has the power to lift us up.

What is Vishesha Dharma? Divide your life into four parts – called the Ashramas – to understand this. The life of a Brahmachari (celibate student) is a life of discipline. The life of a Grihastha (married householder) is a life of self-restraint. The life of a Vanapratha (retired from the world and turning towards spirituality) is a life of tapasya, and the life of a Sanyasi is a life of *tyaaga* (renunciation).

When we talk about giving up all gunas – or becoming detached from them – it does not mean donning saffron robes or adopting any particular style of dressing. What it means is that if a person has renunciation, his life is the life of a Sanyasi, whether he is a Brahmachari, Grihastha or Vanaprasthi. Sanyas jeevan means a life of renunciation, and non-attachment. It is a life of inner illumination. It means that our inner vision is always awake, we don't lose ourselves in the maze of worldly considerations, and we remain alert about these things. We are careful that we don't fall or stumble and harm ourselves; we go ahead with great care. Karma is work, and it is external. Karma done carelessly leads to stupor. If you do things that flout the rules of Dharma, you will lose all self-control. You won't even be able to control your limbs.

When we work for some worldly gain, like manufacturing cloth or cement, etc, it is *shrama* (work). Shrama is undertaken to get something that is external. Wealth and material objects are *sthoola* (gross matter). Shrama is done by the body, and it is superior to gross objects. Buddhi is superior to work, because it directs thousands of workers.

Listen to this once again. Work is superior to material objects, and the intellect is superior to work. The intellect guides thousands of workers

who create material objects and wealth. However, there is something, called Dharma, which is not present in wealth, work, or the intellect that is focused on the external world. Dharma does the work of purifying the intellect. That, which purifies material objects, is called 'shrama', and that, which purifies the antahkaran (fourfold mind), is called 'Dharma'. That, which imitates, is called *'kalaa'* (art), and that which brings changes is called *'vignaana'* (science). Dharma purifies the antahkaran, and shrama manufactures things and makes external changes. Exchange is also shrama. So, you should first purify the karma that is done for the purpose of making the antahkaran pure.

I was traveling with a family once. The matriarch who was with us came from a wealthy family and had a delicate physique. However, when we reached a *dharma-shaalaa* (charitable guest house), she would first clean the rooms and then tell us to settle in. She would clean the kitchen, her own room and our room. She would not leave this to the servants to do. She tightened her sari the way the Maharashtrian women do, and do the cleaning herself. She would do the same before we left the place. Someone asked her why she cleaned the rooms when we were leaving. 'We should leave the place clean for those who come after we leave,' she replied. So, we should leave the things we no longer need, in a state that they can be used by others. If we sell a business that has hidden losses, the buyer will also face losses. To cause harassment to others is not Dharma.

Similarly, when it comes to letting go of gunas, we should make an effort to make them Sattvik. When our gunas are no longer inclined to Rajas or Tamas – to the extent that even Sattva guna does not dominate us – then we should give them up altogether. It is true that the three gunas stay together. They are evenly balanced during *pralay* (Dissolution) and uneven during *srishti* (Creation). They come and go; but when we want to give them up, we should make them as elevated as possible.

You should make sure that the wealth you give your son should be free of problems and complications. It should not be left in a state where it creates friction in the family circle or is riddled with legal disputes. If you give any business to your brother, purify it before handing it over. It is not right if you continue with unethical business practices and leave behind a mess for others to deal with.

What I mean to say is that if you are a *saadhaka* (spiritual seeker) or a Yogi, and want to stay in an elevated state, you should purify the atmosphere in which you live. Make it so pure that your eyes see no evil, your ears become averse to hearing malicious gossip, and your

skin doesn't touch wrong things. This is what is seen in the lives of the Mahapurush.

I have heard that Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa's renunciation was so strong that if anyone hid money under his mat, he felt as though there were scorpions and poisonous insects there. Our inclinations and tendencies, actions and objects, the state we are in and the objects we give up, should all be such that people obtain *satkarma* (good deeds), *sadbhaava* (goodwill) and *sadguna* (good tendencies). People should benefit from even the inclinations we give up.

Just see your *svaroopa* (essence)! Our life is made of the benevolence of Sacchidananda (Sat = pure existence, Chit = pure consciousness, Ananda = pure bliss). When we leave, our state should be such that nobody should feel, 'Is this all they had, to leave behind for us?' Whenever we relinquish anything, we should remember to make it pure first, and then leave it. What will happen if you lose your essence?

The Gita says, *'Gunaa gune`shu vartanate``* and *'indriyaani indriyaarthe`shu'*, but it says one thing first. That is, if you want to let go of this life, remove your 'I' and 'mine' from it. To let go does not mean to destroy, throw away, or banish. Purify the things before relinquishing them, by removing your feeling of possessiveness, then the Ishwara will have no hesitation in calling it 'I' and 'mine'. The Ishwara will call your body His only after your have removed your 'I' and 'mine' from it. Make it so pure that the Ishwara can make it a part of Himself, and even Prakriti can say that it is an example of her Creation.

Yes, Prakriti shows her exhibition pieces. The different roses and other flowers are Prakriti's samples. When the water of the Gangaji emerges from Gomukh and reaches Gangotri, Prakriti says, 'This is a sample of my Creation.' In the same way, the pristine light of the sun is also Prakriti's sample. It is totally colorless. None of the artificial lighting created so far are as free of color as sunlight. There is no color in the Ishwara's Gnan, so make your *aatma-jyoti* (the light of your Atma) free of coloring also. This world is full of colors. Kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed) moha (delusion) and other vikaras (mental distortions) are all colors, nothing else. They have colored our Gnan. We see a friend or an enemy, instead of a human being.

The vikaras have dyed our mind with a variety of hues, but what have the *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions created by Vedic rituals) done? We accept the benefits given by sanskaras insofar as

they wash away the vikaras. The vikaras dye the mind from before, and sanskaras wash their colors away. This is the utility of sanskaras, but when the polish of sanskaras is thickened, it ruins everything. One sanskaras applied the color of *poojaa* (idol worship). Another sanskara applied the color of prayer. A third sanskara applied the color of *namaskaara or namaaz* (bowing down). All these are good for removing the wrong colors, but when their color become solid then the namaskara begins to beat the puja, and the puja beats namaskara; namaskara beats prayer and prayer beats namaz; and puja beats prayer and prayer beats puja! What is this *leelaa* (game)?

It is true that sanskaras are necessary to wash away the vikaras, but they also turn into impurities in the course of time. We apply soap to remove the dirt, but soap turns into dirt unless it is also washed away. So, detach yourself from the vikaras created by Prakriti – the vikaras are Prakriti's doing – and they can be washed away by sanskaras recommended by the Shastras. The Shastras superimpose the sanskaras, so make use of them, and then let them go, and say:

Naiva kinchitkaromeeti yukta manye`ta tattvavit,

Pashyanshrinvansprishanjigranashnangacchansvapanshvasan.

Pralapanvisrijanghrinannumishannimishannapi,

Indriyaaneendriyaarthe`shu vartanta iti dhaarayan.

(5. 8, 9)

(A Sankhya Yogi who has obtained Gnan about the supreme essence – the Tattva – knows that the sense organs move among the sense objects; the Atma is not attached to them. This knowledge is always with him, whether he is listening, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, giving up, accepting, shutting or opening his eyes.)

A thief can say that he is influenced by Tamo guna, an adulterator can say that Rajo guna overcomes him, and a person can do immoral things saying that it is the effect of Tamo guna. A Sattvik person can say, 'My Sattva is right; the Sattva of others is wrong.' Namaskara is right and puja is wrong; prayer is right and namaskara is wrong; namaskar is right and prayer is wrong, puja is right and prayer is wrong! If people justify their actions with such excuses, the extraordinary sukha of *jeevan mukti* (living a liberated life) will be

sullied, because *anaasakti* (non-attachment) is an essential part of jeevan mukti. Such a lifestyle will not benefit society; nor will others believe it to be worth accepting.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan II

'Gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti matvaa na sajjate` (3. 28)'.

(A Gnani knows that the senses move among the sense objects, and the gunas move among the gunas; and hence, they do not get attached to anything.)

'Na sajjate``' means, he does not get attached. In this, there is an incomplete action before a person becomes *asanga* (detached; unattached).

Kim kritvaa na sajjate` (How does he get detached)?

'Iti matvaa na sajjate``'. That means, a person thinks deeply about the matter before deciding, and then he becomes asanga. It is not that he continues to do wrong acts and claims to be asanga. The detachment is a decision taken after considerable thought; it is not a thoughtless action. The same thing is said in the 8th shloka of the 10th chapter.

Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate`,

Iti matvaa bhajante` maam budhaa bhaavasamanvitaah.

(I, Vasudev, am the cause of all Creation and the effort in it. My bhaktas have shraddha and buddhi; they know Me to be the Parameshwara, and do My bhajan continuously.)

'The Gnanis do My bhajan. How? They first come to a decision and then offer Me loving worship. They give this a lot of thought before coming to a conclusion, and experience the principle. Then they do My bhajan.'

What is the principle?

The principle is that just as pots are made of clay, instruments are made of iron, and jewelry is made of gold, everything in this world is made of the Paramatma.

Bhagwan tells us that just as the effect is present visibly in the cause, He is present in everything that exists. Everything that happens, all effort, work, and relationships, happen in Him. The Gnanis realize that nothing exists except Bhagwan. They are overcome by love for Him and do His bhajan.

This indicates how the Gnanis do Bhagwan's bhajan. They do His bhajan in the form of objects, and also in the form of actions and activities. 'All this is Bhagwan, and all activities are His actions.' This is the viewpoint of the bhaktas.

Tattvavittu mahaabaaho gunakarmavibhaagayoh,

Gunaa gune`shu vartanta iti matvaa na sajjate`.

(3. 28)

(O mighty-armed Arjuna, a person who knows the essence of the gunas and karmas is a Gnan Yogi. He realizes that the gunas move among themselves, so they don't get attached to anything.)

Discrimination is essential for bhakti to be pure, and so is *asangataa* (being unattached). Therefore, it is vital to have *vive`ka* (discrimination). When a person lacks vivek, the flow of his

inclinations will not be towards Bhagwan, or *poornataa* (the totality; wholeness). Therefore, it is necessary to see *sangataa* (being attached) and *asangataa* (being detached) from the viewpoint of vivek. It is not acceptable if a person says, 'I steal with detachment.' He steals because of his desire for money. His attachment to wealth is so great that he is willing to flout to the rules of right and wrong to obtain it. How can anybody who has the vision of discrimination accept such a claim? Nobody is prompted into wrong actions unless he is driven by desire.

Now see another point. There is a man who abuses decent, upright people, disrespects his elders, and talks wildly. When asked why he does this, he replies, 'Swamiji, my *nishkaama* (desireless) nature makes me do this. The upsurge of my anger does not exempt my Guru. It says, "What a Guru you are! I have made and discarded any number of Gurus like you!"'. He made Gurus with an *anaasakta* (detached) *bhaava* (feeling), insulted them, and left them. So, when people misbehave with good people, and say that they do so because of their detachment, they need to understand what the method of karma is. Whenever your karma goes against what is right and proper, you can be sure that it is because of *aasakti* (attachment).

If the hand stays where it is, that is fine. It is also fine if sanskaras prompt you to raise it as a greeting. However, if you hit someone in anger, will you be detached or will you be attached to your action? It is obvious that you identify with your hand when you hit someone. You will be involved with your speech when you abuse someone. You cannot abuse someone unless you feel anger or disgust. This is why we want that asangata should first be made pure.

Now see a third viewpoint. There is a set of rules for women and men. I do not speak of other countries; I speak of our country. Here, the rule is that a woman who is not your wife is a *para stree*, and a man who is not your husband is a *para purusha*. From the viewpoint of having a relationship, they are *tyaajyaa* (not to be accepted). When someone flouts the laws of chastity, it is because of attachment, desire, and lust. At that time, he identifies with his desire; he does not remain asanga. There, his 'karma' and his 'I' have become one. It is only when 'I' merges into the Paramatma that it becomes asanga. Only when the 'I' of a person is detached from everything in the world is he asanga.

Does krodha ever seem sweet to you? An angry man says, 'I will teach you a lesson even if it kills me!' When people are overcome by anger, they do things that have severe repercussions. Driven by anger, they do things they would never normally dream of doing. Anger does not

have the Atma's sweetness; nor do hatred, violence and revolt. Hatred is subtle, anger is more cruel than hatred, violence is more cruel than anger, and social revolt is more cruel than individual violence. The sweetness of the Atma merges into the hatred, anger, violence and revolt. All discrimination of right and wrong disappears when this happens.

In Benares, they make a sweet pickle of dried cane. I have tasted the cane – there is no sweetness in it, but it tasted sweet when immersed in sweet syrup. In the same way, when our Atma is immersed in burning anger or greed, they also seem sweet. There is no inherent sweetness in kama, krodha, or lobha. When our Atma is immersed in any of these vikaras, we forget that the Atma is asanga. At that time, we are not alert; we are caught unawares by the feelings and inclinations that rise up in the mind. Our 'I' gets immersed in them, and forgets that the seeming sweetness in the vikaras is actually the Atma's.

Therefore, one has to understand that if anybody does immoral acts believing himself to be asanga, he is a fool. He does not understand what asangataa is. If a thief thinks that he is asanga when he steals something, he is deluding himself. So is a man who turns violent and thinks he is unattached to his actions. Such people do not know that they are sinking to lower levels. So, as I told you earlier, cleanse and beautify even the place you plan to leave. Don't dirty the inn that was your temporary shelter. Where karma is done, purify the cause of the action and then detach your 'I' from it. As long as we have the feeling of being the *kartaa* (doer) and *bhoktaa* (the one who experiences pleasure and pain) remains, both the karma and the bhoga (experience) are ours. So is the body by which they are done. Let the purpose of karma not remain mere work; let it become Dharma.

So, the first step is that karma should become Dharma, and the fruit of this is that our life becomes pure. Our character should be *pavitra* (pure according to the Shastras), our body should be healthy, and our feelings of universal benevolence. We should think about what is right and proper, and our state should be that our 'I' is established in our *svaroopa* (essence). We should never do anything that is against our essence.

I had heard a story from a Mahatma. There was a *bahuroopiyaa* (a man who specialized in disguising himself). He went to a Raja, hoping to get a fat reward for his skills. 'Come to me in a guise where I don't recognize you,' said the Raja. 'Then I will give you a reward.'

The man donned the garb of a Sadhu. He went to a village and started to live there. He had no possessions. He refused to touch metal, look at beautiful women, or touch anybody. If someone offered him a rose he would refuse to smell it. He would not touch anything soft and silky. He would only listen to Bhagwan's name and no other talk. People began to praise him as a great Mahatma who had total renunciation.

Word soon reached the Raja, and he came to get this Mahatma's darshan (see with reverence). He offered the Mahatma lakhs of rupees, which the Mahatma rejected with a gesture. The Raja offered gold coins, which were similarly rejected. The Raja's faith in the greatness of this Mahatma grew stronger.

After a few days, the man gave up his disguise and went to the Raja. 'What do you want?' asked the Raja. 'Maharaj,' said the man, 'I pretended to be a Sadhu, and you failed to recognize me. I have come for my reward.'

'Oh, but I offered you great wealth, which you rejected, and now you have come for a reward? You are a fool!'

'Maharaj,' said the man, 'at that time, the role I had assumed was that of a Mahatma. It would have been against the svaroopa of a Mahatma to accept wealth. I maintained the role of a Mahatma, so I should be given my reward. Even if you give me five rupees, I will accept it; but the lakhs you offered then were of no use to me.' The Raja was impressed by this logic and rewarded the man generously.

The meaning of this story is that you should understand your svaroopa, and not do anything that goes against it. What is our svaroopa? The Gita separates the *karma vibhaaga* (the section of karma) from the *guna vibhaaga* (the section of the gunas). The guna vibhag comes from Prakriti. Prakriti is called '*trigunamayee*' because it has three gunas. It is not visible, but we hear about it. Nobody in this world can claim to have seen Prakriti. One Acharya (Teacher) of Yoga Darshan has said, '*Gunaanaam paramam roopam na drishyate`'*. The actual forms of Sattvaguna, Rajoguna, and Tamoguna cannot be seen. What is seen is a kind of Maya (illusion), and it is insignificant.

When we see someone do Sandhya Vandan, puja, or mediation, we say he is a Sattvik person. When we see someone involved in hectic activity, we say he has Rajoguna. And when we see someone who is very lazy and forgetful, we say he has Tamoguna. The laziness and forgetfulness are not Tamoguna; we assume that Tamoguna is the

cause of his laziness and mental lethargy. Work itself is not Rajoguna. We assume that Rajoguna is causing the tendency of hectic activity. Similarly, the puja and Sandhya Vandan are not Sattvaguna; we assume that Sattvaguna is creating these inclinations.

There is justification for assuming this. Tamoguna creates our gross physical body. Rajoguna gives an urge to be very energetic, and Sattvaguna is responsible for the knowledge we get from our sense organs. We see the three kinds of effect and are able to gauge which gunas dominate the person at that time. The three gunas are evenly balanced at the time of *pralay* (Dissolution) and uneven when the world is active.

The two states of Prakriti are *saamyaavasthaa* (the state of gunas being evenly balanced) and *vaishamyaavasthaa* (unevenly balanced gunas). Creation is the result of vaishamyavastha, and Dissolution is the result of samyavastha. The *saakshee purusha* (the Atma that witnesses without being involved) sees the different states like *kaaranaavasthaa* (the causal state), *kaaryaavasthaa* (the effect), samyavastha and vaishamyavastha. Who is this Sakshi? It is the Paramatma. He is the *drashtaa* (the one who sees) the guna vibhag.

In the same way, there is a *drashtaa* (the one who sees) of the karma vibhag. There are many kinds of karmas. Lack of activity is one kind. The person is lazy. He doesn't want to do any work. Work is done well when a person enjoys doing it. Work done half heartedly is not up to your standard.

There is a word in Sanskrit – *rasa*. Rasa means pleasure; enjoyment. When a person finds no pleasure in the work, it is called 'arasa'. Arasa becomes alasa. The feeling of alasa is called '*aalasya*' – laziness. *Pramaada* means to work when you are intoxicated, when you are not in your senses. This is another form of work. Yet another form of work is that, which is prompted by greed.

Lobhah pravrittiraarambhah karmanaamashamah sprihaa,

Rajasye`taani jaayante` vivriddhe` bharatarshabha.

(14. 12)

(O Arjuna, when Rajoguna increases it gives rise to greed, activity, selfishness, effort for personal gain, lack of peace, and indulging in sense objects.)

People tell me that they don't know what to do with their wealth, and still they go on earning more and more. They don't have trustworthy people with whom they can keep their wealth, so they hoard it themselves. They are unable to stop earning, even after accumulating huge amounts. They have no wish to give away any of it. This is the state of people – greed, and more greed. There is no end to accumulation.

You see, life dominated by work is the life of a Shrudra (laborer). Life dominated by money is the life of a Vaishya (trader), life dominated by power is the life of a Kshatriya, and life dominated by Gnan is the life of a Brahmin. Similarly, a life of discipline is the life of Brahmacharya (celibate student), life dominated by self-restraint is the life of a Grihastha (married householder), life dominated by tapasya is the life of a Vanaprastha (retired person who turns towards spirituality), and life dominated by renunciation is the life of a Sanyasi. These are the divisions of life.

The activities of each division should first be brought within the *maryaadaa* (boundaries) of Dharma. A lady should not flout her maryada, a clerk should not flout his; nor should a soldier or learned man flout the maryada of their status. They should all stay within the limits of what is right and proper for them. People have become confused about this. They should go back to understanding what their ordained duty is. Then, see who is their *adhishthaana* (substratum; foundation) and *kartaa* (the one who does the action)?

Adhishthaanam tathaa karta karanam cha prithagvidham,

Vividhaashcha prithakche`shtaa daivam chaivaatra panchamam.

Shareeravangmanobhiryatkarma praarabhate` narah,

Nyaayam vaa vipareetam vaa panchaite` tasya he`tavah.

Tatraivam sati kartaaramaatmaanam ke`valam tu yah,

Pashyatyakritabuddhitvaanna sa pashyati durmatih.

(18. 14 – 16)

(The substratum and factors that enable people's efforts are the sense organs, methods, and the effects of past good deeds. These are the causes of people doing things that are in keeping with the Shastras.

Even so, when somebody's impure buddhi deludes him into thinking that the Atma – whose essence is pure – is the karta, it means that his intellect is sullied. He lacks Gnan, and does not understand the truth.)

Our Shri Krishna has a habit of abusing people. He says, 'They are *'durmati'*. That means, they are blind; their intellect is faulty. They don't know their Atma. They believe that they have done the actions that have actually been done by others.

Now, add *'na sajjate`'* to this, and see where the work is done; see who the substratum is. When something happens in the body, or in Prakriti, or is done by the Ishwara, where is the scope for any *abhimaana* (pride) of being the karta? The clouds give rain, the sun gives light, and the earth circles the sun. Where is your sanga (involvement) in this? In the same way, what is your effort in getting the body you have? You simply got it. How are you attached to the power that moves your limbs? Where is your doership in this? A baby comes into his mother's womb. He gets a body, and begins to move. Then he is born, and he begins to suckle his mother. Where is your sanga in this? You have been born as a human being. Where is your sanga in this? How long will you live, and how much sukha-dukha will you experience in life? Do you have any control over these things? We have no choice in the body we get, our appearance, or the experiences and events in our life. We are objects of Prakriti that have appeared for some time.

However, when our actions are driven by desires, that is when sanga comes in. The karmas are done by Prakriti, but when our *vaasanaa* (avid desire) mingles with our actions, *aasakti* (attachment) comes in. There is nothing good or bad about moving our hand, but it becomes a good action when we fold our hands politely, and it becomes a bad action when we shake our fist in someone's face in anger. Sanskaras give good actions and vikaras give bad actions.

Action is done by the body. The body has the power to act. You can throw something up, or throw it down. You can fold it up or you can spread it, and you can go somewhere. It is seen that the body can do these five kinds of actions. If the actions are prompted by wrong urges like desire, anger and greed, paapa is created; but the person gets punya if the actions are prompted by good intentions.

The question comes up – what happens when we do something without any good or bad intention? Paapa-punya are created when

good or bad intentions prompt the action, but when someone works without any expectations, it does not create anything. There is no paapa or punya in the things that happen in the body. However, when we do something with the thought, 'I am doing this to get ……' we get either paapa or punya, depending upon whether the intention is bad or good. When we start walking to do daan, going on a pilgrimage, or bow down to a venerable person, there is punya even in walking. But, when we set out for a gambling den, a house of ill repute, or to rob someone, the walking gives paapa.

Karma should be well understood. *Adhishthaana* refers to the body in which *kartaapana* (the subtle ego of being the doer) comes. Karma is done by the *karana* (organs of action). The karans have different kinds of actions. A *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body) develops natural tendencies for the kind of activities he has done in previous lifetimes. He is helped by the Devtas and his *praarabdha* (fate created by past deeds). All that we do, say, and think, is attached to our karmas. These five – *shareera* (body), karan, *svabhaava* (natural inclinations), Devtas, and prarabdha – combine to give a kind of fruit.

Whether your action is right or wrong, it is done by these five. It is not that only our Atma does the work. The karmas are *panchaayati* (by the five). The machines in a well-run factory are well maintained. Your body is like a village that is run by five headmen, who include the workers. The hand picks up food and puts it into your mouth. It picks up a flower and carries it to your nose. It picks up something soft so your skin can touch it. Picking with the hand, walking with the feet, and working properly needs a karta to direct the actions, otherwise, how can anything be done methodically?

It is natural for the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the mouth to eat; yet we feel that we are the karta of these actions. Even when a person his fast asleep, his hand slaps the mosquito that bites him. Thus, these are involuntary actions. You have to search where your 'I' is in them. Is your body made of bones and flesh your 'I'? Is the one who directs your hand to carry food to your mouth your 'I'? Or is it the one who sends your hand to the bed bug that bites you when you are asleep? Who is it that works methodically in our life?

To know this, it is necessary to understand the body's guna vibhaag and karma vibhaag. The food you eat gets digested. That is a karma. The circulation of blood in your body is also a karma; so is the growth of hair on your body. None of these are your karmas, they are Prakriti's karmas, and so there is no question of your becoming asang from such karmas.

It is what you choose to do consciously that you must analyze. For this you will have to understand the essence of your guna vibhag and karma vibhag. There is no need to go into depth about this in bhakti or in Dharma. In Dharma we have to simply follow the guidance of people who are knowledgeable about Dharma. Obedience is predominant in Dharma.

If you have shraddha and bhakti for the Ishwara, you can massage someone's head, apply chandan on his forehead, or garland him. Dharma is present in both the knowledgeable and the ignorant, and so is bhakti. *Asangataa* (being unattached), however, is a vivek of *vignaana* (applied science). It comes with a proper grasp of the subject. Therefore, you should know which of the things that happen in your body are of the guna vibhag and which are of the karma vibhag; which are due to prarabdha, what effect does vasana have on your body, which action of yours is prompted by vasana, and which are prompted by a desire for *mukti* (liberation from the cycle of rebirth).

Only a person who knows this Tattva is called a 'Tattvavit' (enlightened person), and only he understands '*gunaa gune`shu vartante`..'*

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan III

'Amba tvaamanausandadhaami bhagavatgeete` bhavadve`shineem – O Mother Gita, whose form is composed of letters and words, I am exploring you. I experience the motherly love that your heart is filled with.'

The problem is the people are stupid enough to feel the pride of being the karta of actions that are done by the gunas of Prakriti.

Prakrite`h kriyamaanaani gunaih karmaani sarvashah,

Ahankaaravimoodhaatmaa kartaahamiti manyate`.

(3. 27)

(The fact is that all the karmas are being done by the gunas of Prakriti, but a person deluded by pride thinks that he does them.)

Before commenting on this I want to tell you some small points.

The Mahabharata says:

Sarvam jihvam mrityupadam aarjavam brahmanah padam,

E`taavaan gnaanavishayah pratyayah kim karishyati.

This means that the deceit and crookedness in our life is an invitation to death. The person who has them is trapped in the snares of death. On the other hand, the Brahman abides in the person who is straightforward. This is the fruit of all Gnan. *'Pralaapam kim karishyati'* – what is the use of saying anything more?

Now, I give you another example from the Manu Smriti.

Yasya vaangmanasee shudhhe` samyak gupte` cha sarvadaa,

Sa vai sarvamavaapnoti ve`daantopagatam falam.

(Manu Smriti 2. 160)

When the mind and speech are pavitra, the person is protected by Satya and Dharma. He automatically gets all the fruits. What Vyasji

and Manuji have said is the cure of all ills. The Vedas say the same thing. To be free of karmas, it is essential to understand them. Some people are Tamoguni – they are useless. They are in the grip of laziness, dullness and slumber. They submerge the Atma in lethargy and mental stupor. They are incapable of being the Sakshi. If we get caught in these feelings that come and go, we are not *mukta* (free of the gunas and the states they create). Only a man who is not caught in any of the feelings of the interactive world is mukta.

When our *praana* (life spirit) identifies with Tamoguna, we become lazy, drowsy and dull. We are not able to achieve any *purushaartha* (human endeavor or achievement). We cannot interact properly, do Dharma or make a name for ourselves.

The Gangaji is supremely pavitra. To bathe in the Gangaji is Dharma. You should certainly go for an early morning bath in the Gangaji, but if a local man tells you not to bathe at a particular place, you should listen to him, even if he is an uneducated rustic. He knows where it is dangerous to bathe, where a whirlpool, strong currents or crocodiles are likely to be. You should take his advice, and bathe where he tells you.

We should not do anything that is forbidden by the Shastras or elders. Nor should we let ourselves be driven by vasana. We should do what we like only if it has the sanction of the Shastras and the rules of what is right and proper.

The Mahabharata has said – and Shri Shankaracharyaji supports it – that when people do rituals for obtaining what they desire in this world or the next, they get what they want. Our actions carry us to what we desire. However, the karmas done to obtain *nishkaamataa* (the state of being free of desires) purify our antahkaran. We should do things that purify our antahkaran and please Bhagwan.

Whatever we do, we should keep four purposes in mind. The first thing is the removal of vikaras like desire and anger. The second is meditating on Bhagwan and getting His darshan. The third is a desire to know the real Tattva, and the fourth is that we obtain Gnan ultimately.

The sages who had a full grasp of our Shastras have given considerable thought to these four points that indicate that our action is *nishkaama* (free of worldly desires). It is not tenable when a person says he is nishkama, and goes on having child after child every year, or pockets the money that belongs to others. That is making a joke of

nishkamata. We should only do what purifies the mind and helps us to remember Bhagwan. Efforts made to awaken *mumukshaa* (a desire to know the ultimate truth) that gives us Gnan about the Supreme, is also nishkama karma.

If a person sits beside a river, thrashing the water with a stick, that is not nishkama karma; it is a meaningless action. There should be a purpose for what we do. When there is a plan from start to finish, to achieve something worthwhile, the resolve for the action is called a 'sankalpa'. The Shastras say that unless you have a sankalpa, your efforts don't achieve anything.

Now, you have to see whether you have a feeling of being the karta when you do nishkama karma. If you feel, 'I am a very good person. I am working to obtain *nishkaamataa* (freedom from selfish desires)', it is pride. Our Lokmanya Tilak was a great advocate of nishkama karma, and so was Seth Jaydayal Goenka. Lokmanyaji was of the opinion that we could be nishkama only after obtaining Gnan, but Jaydayalji said that we should do nishkama karma even before obtaining Gnan. *'Yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyatvaamashuddhaye`'* (Yogis give up the sanga of the work they do, which is why their actions are pure.)

I did not have the opportunity to meet Lokmanyaji, but I met Goenkaji on several occasions. I used to ask him, 'Is it possible to do nishkama karma before obtaining Tattvagnan? When the karta acts through his karans, there are bound to be some desires that motivate the action, otherwise why would he make any effort? And, if he is the karta, he will have to be the bhokta, because the karta-bhokta always go together.'

This discussion continued for several days. Then Goenkaji told me not to go so deep into the matter. 'When I speak about niskhama karma, my meaning is unselfish work,' he explained. 'It is true that a person will have desires until he obtains Tattvagnan. When we work to free ourselves of our desires, that is what I call nishkama karma. To become nishkama should be our goal.' I spoke about this because many of the people present knew Jaydayalji Goenka.

Kartaapana (the feeling of being the karta) is destroyed when we do something to obtain nishkamata. In kartapan, we get the feeling of *akartaapana* (not being the doer). If a feeling of kartapan is present in us, the fruit of the karma will attach itself to our antahkaran, and we will experience the resultant joys and sorrows sooner or later. We may get it in this life or in the next. When we do something, an *apoorva*

(latent fruit) is created. This gets attached to our antahkaran and gives the fruit when the time is ripe. Even regarding rituals like the Sandhya Vandan, the Shastras say that they are not *nishfala* (barren). If we do the Sandhya Vandan, the paapa done during the night will be removed by the morning ritual, and the paapa done during the day will be removed by the evening ritual. In this ritual we pray for purity. This proves that it is not a ritual that gives no fruit. And, since the actions give fruit, they affect our lives.

As long as you have kartapan, you cannot be fully liberated from karmas or their fruits. So, let us know ourselves as bhaktas who work as the *akartaa* (not the karta), and then think about the shloka mentioned earlier.

Karmas are done with a feeling of *kartrittva* (doership), and then the person establishes himself in a state of being the akarta. How does this happen?

For example, it is a karma when we begin to move our hand. We do this intentionally. This is a *spandan* (pulsating). The power to move becomes secondary, and when we ultimately lose the power to move our hand, we go into a Samadhi. A Samadhi is also the fruit of a karma. *Nivritti* (lack of action; withdrawing from action) replaces *pravritti* (activity) as the fruit of pravritti. Since nivritti is the fruit of pravritti, pravritti returns when the fruit is over, because the fruit of action is always transient. Thus, action and its fruit alternate in an endless cycle. In the same way, a person who feels that he is the karta will never get free of the bonds of karma.

The Vedantis give a challenge. If you obtain the Gnan of the Atma (in the individual) that is involved in this interactive world, and believe that the *jeeva* (Atma attached to a body) is the karta in this world and in the realms after death, that he goes to Swarga-Narak, as the result of his actions, and is reborn, you have not got *mukti* (liberation from the cycle of rebirth). You accept that the Atma is separate, but when you continue to believe that the jeeva is the karta-bhokta, the one who goes to Heaven or hell, and is reborn, how does this Gnan benefit you?

The Gita says that it is Prakriti and the gunas of Prakriti who do karmas.

Prakrityaiva cha karmaani kriyamaanaani sarvashah,

Yah pashyati tathaatmaanamakartaaram sa pashyati.

(13. 29)

(The person, who sees that all karmas are done by Prakriti, and that the Atma is the akarta, sees the truth.)

Prakrite`h kriyamaanaani gunaih karmaani sarvashah,

Ahankaaravimoodhaatmaa kartaahamiti manyate`.

(3. 27)

(The fact is that everything is being done by Prakriti, through the gunas of Prakriti. Even so, a person whose antahkaran is deluded by ahankara is an *agnaanee* [one who lacks Gnan], believing himself to be the karta.)

The first shloka says that Prakriti does the karmas, and the second shloka says that the gunas of Prakriti – Sattva, Raj, and Tama – do everything; but people develop pride by identifying with the gunas. They say, 'I am a Sattvaguni, I am a Rajoguni, or I am a Tamoguni,' believing that they are the kartas. A Tamoguni is a person who imagines himself to be the owner of the body and mind. There is the *shaastra-kalpita bhaava* (a feeling that is imagined because of what the Shastras say), and there is the *agnaana-kalpita bhaava* (feelings imagined because of lack of Gnan). Nobody gets the feeling, 'I am a body'. The feelings that are imagined in connection to the body are known. Nobody obtains the knowledge, 'I am a puppet made of the panchabhoots,' because even other species are made of the five elements, and so are plants.

In the feeling, 'I am a human being,' people further imagine, 'I am a Hindu, I am a Brahmin, I am a Sanyasi.' Thus, the imagined feelings may be related to the Shastras, or be completely unconnected to them. These are the imagined feelings that bind us to this gross body made of bones, flesh and skin. This is what gives the feeling of being the karta, and it is called 'Tamoguna'.

When a person feels, 'I am a learned person, a pious person, or, a sinner,' it is called a feeling of Rajoguna. And, the feeling of Sattvaguna is when somebody feels, 'I am tranquil, I am in a state of

Samadhi.' These are called the *svabhaava* (nature) or the gunas, of Prakriti. It is because of our nature that we get the feelings of being a Gnani, a powerful person, or a person capable of earning wealth. There are the Sattvaguni, Rajoguni, and Tamoguni *bhaava* (feelings). We are bound by these feelings when we do anything, and we become the bhokta because we believe ourselves to be the karta.

People who know the philosophies of Sankhya and Yoga have said, 'You are not the one who does the karma; it is the Prakriti's guna who do everything.' The bhaktas say, 'No, neither Prakriti nor her gunas do anything. The real karta of all karmas is the Parameshwara.'

Another opinion is, 'The Yogis have credited karma to Prakriti and the bhaktas say that it is the Ishwara who does everything, to free the Atma of the karmas.' The viewpoint of bhakti, however, is very sweet.

Ishvarah sarvabhootaanaam hridde`she`rjuna tishthati,

Bhraamayansarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa.

Tame`va sharanam gaccha sarvabhaave`na bhaarata,

Tatprasaadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam praapsyasi shaashvatam.

(18. 61, 62)

(O Arjuna, the Ishwara abides in all beings. He sits astride the machine of the body and uses His Maya to make it do things in keeping with the past karmas of the jeeva.

O Bharata, take refuge in Him in every way. It is by His Grace that you will obtain supreme peace and the supreme abode that is eternal.)

This is the only way to be liberated from karmas and their bonds. The first method is the method of vivek. 'I am not an object created by Prakriti or the gunas of Prakriti.' Vivek means to separate, like separating the grains of gold from the grains of sand. Karmas are like a forest in which the Atma has lost its way. To free the Atma from this jungle is vivek.

If a person has bhakti, he knows that this jungle belongs to our Beloved. *'Pashya de`vasya kaavyam'* – look at this beautiful poem of

the Ishwara! The Ishwara can be found in poetry and in music. Bhagwan gives Himself many names. He says, 'I am the creeper, I am the tree, I am the worm and I am the butterfly. I am the human being, I am the Devta, the animals, the birds, Narasimha, Varaha and Vaman.' Just as His Avatars have names, everything in this world has a name and a form. Bhagwan manifests in a variety of names and forms. It is He who speaks and moves in all forms.

'Ishwara' means a person who is used to ruling, who enjoys ruling, and abides in all. *'Sarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa'* means, the machine is going round and round, and the person sitting on it is also going round and round. Once I had gone to Triveni. The boatman was someone I'd known since long. He made the boat dance in the circles. I also went round and round, sitting in the boat. Thus, we sit on the boat of Maya, of Prakriti, of our body, and our antahkaran; and the Ishwara makes the boat dance.

Now see where the Ishwara stays – *bhavanti iti bhootaani* – whatever is created, is filled with the Ishwara, and He makes it dance. It is His Maya that He does not dance although He abides in all. *'Eeshvarah sarvabhootaanaam hridde`she`rjuna tishthati'*. He uses His Maya to control all the bodies and the *prapancha* (interactive world), and makes it go round. He sits in our heart and rules our buddhi.

A person may ask that if the Ishwara rules our intellect, the good and bad qualities in us are His; so why should we get the paapa-punya of actions that are prompted by them? The answer to this is that the electricity that activates all electronic equipment is not to blame for the gadget's defect. Electricity is generated in the powerhouse, and runs through a wire to the light, fan, heater or air conditioner. Even in the powerhouse, it is created by Maya. Electricity is everywhere, but unmanifested. Don't look at the bulb, don't look at the wire, and don't even look at the powerhouse – the intellect. Look at the main object that is the essence of Gnan. Obtain it, experience it, and know what pristine Gnan is. Now you have got a path by which you can reach the Paramatma.

Tame`va sharanam gaccha sarvabhaave`na bharata,

Tatprassadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam praapsyasi shaashvatam.

(18. 62)

(O Bharata, take refuge in the Parameshwara in every way. By His

Grace you will obtain supreme peace and the eternal supreme abode.)

I will give you an example. A man's room was shut. Inside, there was a shallow dish of water that shone brightly. The man began to wonder how the sun had come into the dish. He noticed a mirror standing there. The sunlight fell on the mirror and was reflected onto the dish of water. Our heart also shines; from where does the light come? It comes from a source that is brighter than the sun. Our heart does everything with that light.

How did the path to the Ishwara appear? From where do the reflections of Gnan and ananda come? Who gives the desire for immortality? Had immortality been impossible, we would not have had a desire for it. Had enlightenment been impossible, we would not have a desire for Gnan. Had pure bliss not been within our reach, we would not have desired happiness.

However, the source of Gnan, ananda, and *sattaa* (pure existence) is not far, nor will it take long to find, because it is no other. It is where the experience of the effulgence is. All that happens is done by Him. It is the principle of shraddha and bhakti that the Ishwara is both the karta and the bhokta. The 'I' of a human being is neither the karta nor the bhokta.

There is an episode in the Shrimad Bhagwat about Raja Bharat. He was doing a Yagya. The Bhagwat describes his mental state and also what the mental state of a person doing a Yagya should be. A question is raised that when Bharat offers an oblation, should the fruit (of the karma of making the offering) go to him, or to Indra (to whom the oblation is offered)? If it should go to Bharat, why should the Brahmins say, *'Indraaya svaahaa'* (this is given to Indra)? And, how does Indra feel the satisfaction of getting the offering?

The answer given there is that the Parameshwara in Bharat's body lifts Bharat's hand and places the oblation in the fire. The Parameshwara is also the *antaryaami* (the one who abides in the heart) of Indra, and He accepts the offering and experiences satisfaction. The same Parameshwara is in Bharat's body and in Indra's body. It is the Paramatma who is the karta and bhokta.

Thus, when the Ishwara is the karta who propels the actions, He is also the bhokta who experiences their fruits. The Atmadev is liberated from the interactive world. This is how the Atma is shown to be the

akarta in the paths of Bhakti Yoga and Sankhya Yoga. The Gita tells us how to become the akarta in the path of Karma Yoga.

Yadahankaaramaashritya na yotsya iti manyate`,

Mithyaisha vyavasaayaste` prakritistvaam niyokshyati.

(18. 59)

(Your ahankara makes you thing that you will not fight, but your resolve is false, because your nature will compel you to fight.)

Shri Krishna told Arjuna that the nature of his body, inherited from previous births, was that of a Kshatriya; it would compel him to follow his true nature – that of a fearless warrior. Arjuna's belief that he was free to choose whether to fight or not, was false. Now, let us return to what we discussed yesterday. What is *'gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti matvaa na sajjate`'*? There are some people in every village who make a great show of grandeur. One man wanted his son to get married to a girl from a prosperous family. When the girl's relatives came to his village to see how they lived, he borrowed a horse and two oxen, and tied them by his door. The village had a charitable guest house, which he claimed to be his. He pointed out to the lush fields of crop around the village, saying that he owned a large area of these. The girl's people were convinced that he was a prosperous man, and agreed to the match.

In the same way, our karmas are not our own. The body that works is the product of Prakriti, but we develop the pride of its being ours. Our limbs are instruments by which work is done. The different organs of action do different things, and they are helped by the Devtas. How could the eyes see if there was no Surya Devta? How could the ears hear, if there were no Dig Devtas (presiding deities of the directions)? Thus, karmas done by my body are not done by me – several factors contribute to it.

Tatraivam sati kartaaramaatmaanam ke`valam tu yah,

Pashyatyakritabuddhitvaann sa pashyati durmatih.

(18. 16)

(Even though it is a fact, people whose intellect is impure believe that the Atma – whose essence is pristine – does the karma. Such people are deluded; they don't understand the truth.)

The work is done by the groups of five (the five elements and their presiding deities, the five sense organs and their objects, the five organs of action, etc) but a person who is blind, who has not obtained wisdom from the Guru or the Shastras, nor purified his intellect, says that he is the karta. A person who has not developed the right intellect is blind; he lacks vision. Such people claim to be the karta of deeds done by others. To lay claim to something that is someone else's will lead to suffering.

A gentleman was going from Delhi to Madras by train. He was sitting in his compartment, waiting for the train to start, when a man came hurriedly and shoved a large trunk under the seat. 'Keep an eye on this till I come,' he requested. The man agreed. The man had not returned when the train started. When the Ticket Inspector came to check the tickets, he asked the man, 'Whose trunk is this?' 'It is mine,' the gentleman replied. They reached Madras, and got out. The Police stopped the man as he stepped out on the platform. 'What is in this truck?' they asked. The trunk was opened. A corpse was inside. The man was a great trouble because he had told the Ticket Inspector that it was his trunk. He was taken to a Magistrate, and released only after his lawyer argued that had he known what was in the trunk, he would never have claimed it as his own.

Our Atmadev (the Atma attached to a body) does not understand his own essence. He does not know what Prakriti is, what the Ishwara is, and what karma is. He thinks that he is the one who does everything and owns everything; and so he gets caught. This is the bondage of the world. In this world, it is the person who lifts up both arms and declares that nothing is his, who gets free of worldly bondage. When a man becomes a Sanyasi he stands naked with both arms lifted up, and says, '*Naaham name*` - I don't exist; nothing is mine.'

The matter does not end there. You must obtain full knowledge about the Paramartha (supreme achievement). It is not enough to say, 'This work is not done by me; it is done by my nature and the gunas.' You cannot obtain liberation by saying that the Ishwara or Prakriti have done the work. To achieve liberation you have to experience your

essence. Your essence (the Atma; the Brahman) is not only negation. It is not even a state of pure Paramartha.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan IV

If someone is fond of singing, even his weeping becomes musical. Shri Krishna created a musical atmosphere even in Arjuna's *vishaada* (dejection), and sang the Gita. Arjuna is weeping, and Shri Krishna is singing! The Vedanta that is usually discussed in forests has been brought to the battlefield by Shri Krishna. A *saarathi* (driver of the chariot) is giving a sermon that great Mahatmas give. A sarathi should do what the rathi (charioteer) says, but here, He is giving a sermon to the rathi. This Gita is wonderful! It makes the three gunas disappear, and creates an absence of gunas. It transforms karma into akarma (absence of karma). It is a revolution in the sphere of metaphysics. According to the Gita, Gnan can be maintained even in worldly interaction. People may feel happy or sad, but the Gita's Yogi sees happiness and sorrow with equal detachment.

The Gita says –

Aatmaupamye`na sarvatra samam pashyati yorjuna,

Sukham vaa yadi vaa dukham sa yogee paramo matah.

(6. 32)

(O Arjuna, the Yogi who sees the sukha-dukha in others as his own, is a Yogi of the most superior level.)

Shri Madhusudan Saraswati has said that there are two kinds of Yogis – *apara* and *para*. The apara Yogi is one who sits cross-legged in a cave, with one hand on the other on his lap. He is of a lower level than the param Yogi. Who is a param Yogi? A param Yogi is one who retains mental equilibrium even in the midst of neighing war horses, the battle-cry of conch shells, and the showering of arrows. The Gita's Yoga is not for the Sanyasi; it is for a warrior and those who are active in this world.

Now, let us think about karma. Karma needs a state of being free from doubts. Nobody can work efficiently if he is criticized and corrected continuously. How can a man drive well if his wife keeps telling him to go left, or right, or fast, or slow? A person should be allowed to work without constant interference. Nor should there be any doubt in his mind. For this, he needs to know what he should do and what he should not do.

Your physical form is composed of bones, flesh and skin created by Prakriti. The functions of the body – like the circulation of blood, growth of nails and hair – are all done by Prakriti. This is Prakriti's department; these are her karmas. The Ishwara's karma is the allocation of sukha-dukha; it is He who gives the fruit of *praarabdha* (fate created by past karmas.)

There is the department of the *jeeva-karma* (karma done by the individual who believed himself to be the doer). The jeeva experiences things through his sense organs, acts through his organs of action, makes mistakes, feels uncertainty, and does things to induce sleep or stay awake. He keeps remembering the past. *Agnaana* (lack of Gnan), *asmitaa* (pride), *raaga* (attachment), *dve`sha* (aversion), and *abhinive`sha* (fear of death; identifying with the body) get attached to him. The eye sees thousands of people, but raga-dvesha come when you want to see someone or don't want to see someone. You see something that frightens you – that is abhinivesha. 'Oh, I have seen this and this' – the feeling of asmita comes. Then agnan raises

questions about what you did or didn't do, and you carry the burden of your actions and omissions.

There are many things you must know, about how much that happens is of the guna *vibhaag* (department), karma vibhag, and Ishwara vibhag. All karmas are done by the combined help of Prakriti and the Purusha (the Atma in the individual). When you get a glimmering of the *chaitanya* (consciousness), the antahkaran superimposes desire on itself, and the karma is prompted by Prakriti and the Purusha. Then the Atma (in the individual), feelings, Gnan, desires, karmas, fruits, good and bad experiences all come into your life. You should give some thought to all these.

The impurity in our karma attaches itself to us in three ways. One is the feeling, 'I did this karma.' The second is the false feeling of being an akarta. This is escapism. The third is when a person does not work actively, but sits in an asana – that is also a karma. He did the karma of straightening his back, placing his hands on his lap and keeping his eyes closed. He maintains this posture and thinks that he is not doing anything. He may not be doing any one thing, but he is doing many things, An intelligent man realizes that this is not akarma; it is another kind of karma.

There is a knowledge by which you can be safe from getting paapa-punya even when you work actively. Paapa-punya are not Prakriti's actions. Nor are they the Ishwara's actions. The jeeva makes Prakriti's karma his own because of his foolishness. He also makes the Ishwara's karma his own. When someone attaches his own desire for sukha to come in future, and dukha to be kept away, to the karmas of Prakriti, it turns into paapa or punya. Paapa and punya are the karmas of a jeeva. Prakriti's karma is to pulsate. So, don't attach yourself to the karmas of Prakriti. Don't have the subtle ego that you have done the things that happen naturally. And, don't attach your *vasanaa* (avid desire) to the sukha-dukha that are the karmas of the Ishwara. Don't think that you are doing everything that happens.

Prakrite`h kriyamaanaani gunaih karmaani sarvashah,

Ahankaaravimoodhaatmaa kartaahamiti manyate`.

(3. 27)

(The fact is that everything that is done is prompted by the gunas of Prakriti. A person who lacks Gnan, and whose mind is deluded by

pride, believes that he is the karta of these actions.)

If you are the karta of your good deeds you are also the karta of your bad deeds. Several factors contribute to karmas. The actions of your past life, your worship, and your desires influence you karmas. You should use discrimination to understand which of your karmas are prompted by them. What is the *buddhi* (intellect) and what is the *pragyaa* (wisdom) in your actions? Every new action contains these influences. Some tendencies come from your mother's parents and some come from your father's parents. Some come from your own parents, the people you associate with, what you study, wheat you read, and your intake when you were in your mother's womb. So, you should see to what extent the work is influenced by you and by other factors.

Also, does the texture and hue of your face and body come from outside or from within? You have to know these things to understand your nature and your essence. People attach the impurities of karmas to themselves and then try to escape from them. The result is that they get attached to the impurity of a false sense of being an akarta.

We enslave ourselves at times. We can't stop ourselves from doing things. This is called *'aadava mala'*. There are three types of mala (filth) – *karma-mala, maayaa-mala* and *aadava-mala.* We neglect to wash away the filth that comes from our actions. We don't know the source of money that comes into our house. When our income has caused suffering to someone, it brings sorrow to us. A part of it needs to be put aside. There are methods of atonement that should be known and used. There are some faults that are inherent in our karmas. You read in the Gita –

Sarvaarmbhaa hi doshe`na dhoome`naagnirivaavritaah.

(18. 48)

(Faults are attached to karmas just as smoke is attached to fire.)

When the lentil called arhar dal is cooked, the impurities in it rise to the surface. They have to be removed and thrown away, otherwise the dal won't soften. The same thing happens when sugar cane juice is

cooked to make jaggery, and then the jaggery becomes a lovely golden brown. Similarly, the faults in our mind, karma, and wealth have to be separated and removed. Then our life will shine like gold.

It is also a Maya to say that the Purusha (the Atma in the individual) is the akarta, because the feeling – 'I am the akarta' – is a superimposition. The purpose of this superimposition is to remove the feeling of being the karta. Just thinking that you are the akarta is not enough. It is a sadhana. The karmas are being done by Prakriti, by the gunas, and they are *panchaayati* (of the five). When something is done by a group, there is a *saakshee* (witness) and *drashtaa* (observer).

The Gita uses two methods to explain that you are the sakshi of the karma. Just this morning, somebody said that Shri Krishna created a dilemma by saying that karmas are done by Prakriti, by the gunas, at the Ishwara's wish, because of the individual's nature, and done automatically. Shri Krishna created a controversy by raising doubts about who the real karta is. How can this confusion be resolved?

There is no confusion. Shri Krishna has clarified the principle that the Atma is not the karta. Whether you say, *'Naayam hanti na hanyate` (2. 19)* (neither do I kill not do I die), or whether you see it from the angle of *'ve`daavinaashinam nityam (2. 21)'* (know that the indestructible Atma is everlasting), the jeeva is not the karta.

The feeling of *kartaapana* (being the karta) is removed by Gnan, and caused by agnan. Nothing can be done without subtle vanity of kartapan, without the cause, matter, and help of the whole. To remove the feeling of being the karta, and the agnan about these matters, you must feel, *'Naaham karta, naaham bhokta, naiva kinchit karomiti yukto manye`t tattvavit.'* An enlightened person knows that he is neither the karta, nor the bhokta; that he does nothing. This is the viewpoint of Sankhya Darshan.

From the viewpoint of Dharma, know that as the karta you must give up all wrong acts, and do the good deeds you should do. Make a plan of the good things you should do, and link them from the start to the conclusion. Review them mentally before you act. This is the department of Dharma – the *dharma vibhaaga.* It becomes a service of the Ishwara if you chalk out the complete plan of the good things you plan to do, whether it is farming or sweeping the floor, manufacturing cloth or cement. Observe what prompts your actions, what your action leads to, and who carries it there. This is called 'bhakti'. The meaning of karma is serving the Ishwara. *'Gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti matvaa',* is the discrimination of the Sankhya.

You have to first understand the essence of Prakriti and the Purusha. The jeeva is an illusion created by their union, and the jeeva is the karta. The Ishwara never gives agnan; He gives inspiration. There is no karma in the *shuddha-buddha-mukta* (pristine-enlightened-liberated) Brahman; nor is there *bhoga* (pleasant and unpleasant experiences), inspiration, or duality. When a person understands the mystery of the Prakriti, jeeva, and the Ishwara, it becomes the Tattva (essence). So, understand the jeeva-tattva, and the jagat-tattva (the essence of the world), and sit atop it. Then, see *'naiva kinchit karomi (5. 8)'* (I do nothing).

We see with the eyes, hear with the ears, eat, breathe, talk, walk, and sleep; but *'indriyaani indriyaarthe`shu vartante`'* – our sense organs move among their objects. This is what you have to keep in mind. Don't have the pride of being the karta. This is not something to be felt only in solitude. Once you have realized this, the feeling of being the akarta will remain with you, whatever you do.

Have faith in Bhagwan and be yukta (yoked to Him). This is the method of becoming a *sthitapragya* (a person established in his Self). Your intellect should be steady, not wavering; and it should not be led by desires. It should be free of desires.

Nihsprihah sarvakaame`bhyo yukta ityuchyate` tadaa.

(6. 18)

(When the mind is fully established in the Paramatma, the person becomes totally desire-less.)

Gnaana-vignaana triptaatmaa kootastho vijite`ndriyah,

Yukta ityuchyate` yogee samaloshtaashma kaanchanah.

(6. 8)

(A person whose antahkaran is totally satisfied because of Gnan and vignana, is in control of his senses. He is equally indifferent to a clod of earth, a stone, and a piece of gold.)

The mention of the earth, stone and gold indicates that the person is in worldly interaction. And yet, Gnan and vignana (Gnan applied to our daily life) make a person so satisfied inwardly that his inner detachment remains unaffected when he interacts in the world. He is *nishkriya* (inactive) even while he works.

Shaknotihaiva yah sodhum praakshareeravimokshanaat,

Kaamakrodhodbhayam ve`gam sa yuktah sa sukhee narah.

(5. 23)

(The spiritual seeker who succeeds in conquering anger and lust in this very life, is a Yogi, and only such a Yogi is truly happy.)

If you have a strong desire for something, and you try to suppress it, it will create a greater agitation in your body. However, there will be no agitation if you have the desire to be free of your desire. Then, your desires will gradually weaken and fade away. Today's psychologists say that desires should not be suppressed. That is all right for those who want to fulfill their desires, but not for those who want to be free of desires. Now you have to judge for yourself whether you feel happy when your desires are fulfilled, or when you have no desires to trouble you. Actually, the result of both is the same.

Two men were traveling together. One felt thirsty. He walked into the village, borrowed a rope and vessel, drew and drank water from the well, felt satisfied, and then went to return the implements he had borrowed. The other man felt satisfied without making any effort, since he was not thirsty. Thus, the happiness a desirous person gets when his desire is fulfilled is the same as the happiness of a person who is free of desires.

Our natural happiness is hidden under the veil of desire. Our life should be free of worldly desires, and we should always do our duty. There is happiness in this. *'Siddhayasiddhayau samo bhootvaa' (2. 48)*, or, *'Yogah karmasu kaushalam' (2. 50)*, are both methods of working. Don't insist that you must travel to America via Japan, and not via England. You will reach America whether you go via the East or via the West.

If you want *aatma-sukha* (inner happiness) to endure, don't look at

what is happening. The veil of *vaasanaa* (lust; avid desire) must be removed. Our Vedantis say that it is a karma when someone holds on to a false feeling of being the akarta.. Even the person who believes he is the akarta and says, *'Gunaa gune`shu vartante`'* and sits in his essence, is also attached to work. You see, but what do you see? You see the geographical world, the interactive world, and the five elements. Do you see them through the sense organs or through your antahkaran? Do you see the interactive world connected to someone, or unconnected to anyone? This is the mistake people make – they see the world connected to their mind, senses and body.

I will tell you something abut Vedanta. One man said, 'I can see that this is a flower.' Very well, you see it. However, the flower is *drishya* – it is something you see, something that is separate from you. Are your eyes, and the form that the mind sees through the eyes, drishya or not? If you see the interactive world – called *prapancha* – only through your body, if you identify with your body and see the prapancha, then, my brother, you need Vedanta. Should we consider the prapancha to be *satya* (eternal existence) or *mithyaa* (a relative truth that is seen temporarily)? If you intellectually accept the prapancha but continue to identify with your senses, you are not the *shuddha drashtaa* (totally impartial observer). You sit in your body of three and a half arm-lengths, and consider yourself to be the karta, drashta, sakshi; but this is not right. You should be detached, like, *'gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti matvaa na sajjate`.'*

To be asanga means to not get involved with whatever happens. Whatever is done, let it be done; whatever is said, let it be said; whatever is destroyed, let it be destroyed. If you give an opinion about what should be and what should not be, you identify with your wishes. The Sankhya Darshan does not consider the Atma to be *anu* (miniscule); they say it is *vibhu* (vast; all-pervading). The drashta (the Atma in the individual) is also vibhu. When he sees the all-pervading space, the imagined calculation of time, and the multiplicity of objects, he becomes *aparichhinna* (un-fragmented, one with the whole) with time, space and matter. He is, in truth, the totality. Without going deeper into Vedanta, I will just say that the undivided drashta is the substratum of the absolute absence of all differentiation. There are no differences of jeevas, objects, things that are seen, or the Ishwara; but everything seems to exist.

You have now become independent. There is an independence that lacks wisdom, like today's youngsters and frequent visitors to foreign lands, who feel free to behave as they wish. They have no knowledge of their essence. Their behavior is brash and uncaring of decorum.

Then there are people who have some knowledge about their essence, but they are not independent. It is an impurity to be dependent in spite of knowing your essence. It is also an impurity if you don't know your essence and behave in an improper way. This is why there is a need for sadhana.

Use a little *buddhi* (intelligence) and a little *bhaava* (feeling). Don't burden yourself with all that happens. You are a small jeeva. If you burden yourself with all the paapa and punya, the load will be unbearable. Use the knowledge of your *svaroopa* (essence; Self) to discard your load.; be free of doubts and dilemmas.

A Thakur Sahib and I had gone to the office of Babu Sampurnanandji when he was the Editor of 'Uday'. Later on he became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Babuji was writing something when we went. His long hair kept falling over his eyes, and he kept jerking his head to fling back the hair, and continue writing. Thakur Saheb told me, 'This is how we should throw off the worries that come to cover our Gnan, and we should go ahead as fearlessly as a lion.'

The realization of our essence frees us from fear, doubt, and dilemma. A millionaire is not distressed by the loss of a few thousands. He cuts his losses and starts a new enterprise. When we know our worth, we don't get upset by trifling matters. Our essence is great, pristine, bright and divine. Once we know it, we have no need to worry about petty worldly problems.

'Eeshvarah sarvabhootaanaam (18. 61)' (the Ishwara abides in all beings) is for placing all burdens on the Ishwara. *'Adhishthaanam tathaa karta (18. 14)'* (He is the substratum and the karta) is for placing all burdens on society. So, be free of perplexities. Retain the knowledge of the *poornataa* (totality) and richness of your essence, because you can never let it go. You are that essence.

If we go ahead in life in this manner, there are no sorrows, obstacles or problems. This is the art of leading a life that is free of doubts and intricate dilemmas.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan V

The thought must have come to you at some point, whether Shankarji gets paapa for causing the Dissolution, and Vishnu Bhagwan gets punya for sustaining the world. Furthermore, whether Brahmaji feels sad at the death of any of the many children he creates.

You believe that neither does Shivaji get paapa, nor does Vishnu Bhagwan get punya; Brahmaji feels no partiality for any of his children. But, have you every thought about why this is so? It is because of a particular Gnan that they have, which enables them to remain unaffected by paapa, punya, and partiality.

What is this Gnan?

The objects to be known are different, and the instruments through which they are known are separate, but the differences do not create different Gnans. Gnan is one. Whether you see with your eyes, and hear with your ears – your eyes and ears are separate – but the Gnan is one. Gnan is neither red nor green; it is not the ears nor is it the eyes. We have convinced ourselves that it is not possible for us to get the Gnan that Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva have.

It is because we have placed our 'I' in this body made of flesh, bones and skin, that we have this feeling. All the Vedas, Vedanta, and Shastras wish to remove this feeling of inferiority, but we hold on to it like a crocodile hold on to its prey. We can't let go of this feeling for even a little while, hence we are not able to give thought to our true essence, our real Self.

It is my belief that you read the Gita. If you don't, you should; but not like a story book. Read it attentively.

Shri Krishna says –

Naadatte` kasyachit paapam na chaiva sukritam vibhuh,

Agnaane`naavritam gnaanam te`na muhyanti jantavah.

(5. 15)

(The all-pervading Parameshwara does not absorb anybody's paapa or punya, but people get deluded because agnan covers their Gnan.)

'Vibhu' means (vi = variety, bhu = existence) the Gnan and pure existence that is present in all the diverse and adverse objects in the world. For example, the sky is vibhu. There are many pots, but the sky in them, and outside them, is one. Space is vibhu, the four directions are vibhu, and *kaala* (time), in which the past, present and future exist, is vibhu. Paapa and punya do not affect the vibhu. The sky is unaffected by dust; nor is it swept away by the wind or wet by rain.

The vibhu is not an object. It does not grasp anybody's paapa or punya. Our agnan covers up our Gnan and deludes us. Man is no longer a man; he has become a *jantu* (a creature). *'Jaayante` niyante` iti jantavah'* – a jantu is a being that is born and dies, and has no metaphysical knowledge. We have become like animals because our agnan has covered up our Gnan. Our delusion makes us believe that paapa and punya have got attached to us.

This is why Shri Krishna said –

Na kartritvam na karmaani lokasya srijati prabhuh,

Na karmafalasanyogam svabhaavastu pravartate`.

(5. 14)

(The Paramatma does not give us the feeling of being the karta, nor does He create karmas, or connect the fruits of the karmas to them. It is a person's own nature that makes him believe these things.)

That means, the Parameshwara has not created *kartritva* (the feeling of being the karta) for us. We have no cause to take pride in our actions. The Paramatma did not even create karmas that would give good or bad fruits. Then, what is the cause of all this?

'Svabhaavastu pravartate`'. There is a mechanism in us, called the 'svabhaava', meaning, our nature or temperament. Electricity does not get dirty; the machine gets dirty. Our svabhava is the mechanism called the 'antahkaran', composed of the mind, intellect, inclinations and the subtle ego of individuality. It is our svabhava that gets attached to paapa and punya, believes itself to be the karta, attaches the fruit of our karmas to us, and makes us feel sad or glad.

Don't lose sight of the principle when you read *'Tasmaat yuddhasva bhaarata (2.18)'*, where Shri Krishna tells Arjuna to fight. Once somebody asked Shri Krishna why He worked so hard, working even at night, when other people slept. Shri Krishna's life had neither *shrama* (work) nor *vishraama* (repose). His life was one of continuous activity for the good of all. He played the flute and the veena, He sang and made music, and He worked joyfully. He manifested *aananda* (bliss). There is anand in Shri Krishna's eyes, on His face, in His feet, in His walking and in His sleeping. Shri Krishna says, *'Na maam karmaani limpanti na me` karmafale` sprihaa (4. 14)',* meaning, Shri Krishna has no wish to get the fruits of His actions, and so the karmas don't attach themselves to Him. This is how Shri Krishna lives.

The sun goes from the East to the West. Some people get a sunstroke and die, but the sun gets no paapa. Some people recite the Vedas in the light of the sun, but the sun gets no punya. This is how we should work. *Charaive`ti, charaive`ti* – go on, proceed with your life. There is no need to turn back and look at what is gone. The past is gone forever and you can't stop the future from bringing what it will. The present is what you have to live in.

Flowing water is good, a wandering Yogi is good, but the fruit that rots on the tree or in your house is not good. Don't try to hold on to the fruit of your karmas. *'Vihaaya kaamaanyah sarvaan pumaanshcharati nihsprihah (2. 71)'.*The Yogi has no desire and no inclination to hold on to the fruit when it comes. If the fruit is *nirguna* (without the gunas), there is no attachment to it. Even if he calls it his, he feels no pride of having it. *'Nirmamo nirahankaara sa shaantimadhigachhati (2. 71)'* – he is at peace because he has no attachment and no pride.

A Mahatma lived on the hillock opposite our Anand Vrindavan Ashram. His name was Hathi Baba. I used to go for his darshan. On one occasion Baba noticed that a Sadhu sitting there was wearing a watch. Baba asked him why he wore a watch. The Sadhu replied that a bhakta had given it to him pleading that it was a useful object. 'If someone brings you a young girl and asks you to keep her because she

will be useful, will you accept?' asked Hathi Baba. 'The offerings of bhaktas should be accepted only if it doesn't go against your svaroopa. There should be no wish in you to get anything and no urge to retain what you get.'

A Sadhu lived at Swargashram some fifty years ago. He kept telling people, 'I had five lack rupees. I distributed them among my sons and came away without a single rupee.' He wanted people to know how much renunciation he had. Similarly, an associate at the Kalyan Pariwar kept telling us that he was a double M.A. and that he had torn up his certificates and thrown them into the Gangaji. He said this at least two or three times in a day. One day, I teasingly told him, 'You must have somehow managed to scrape through graduation.' He flared up in anger. 'What do you think? I can teach you for ten years!' Another person in our group told him, 'You have not torn up and thrown your certificates in the Gangaji. They are stuck to your heart.' What I want you to understand is that people unconsciously develop pride about the things they give up. They take pride in not being attached to anything worldly. If you tell a *tyaagee* (a person who has renounced worldly considerations) that he is a hoarder, he is quite likely to get angry.

The special quality of Shri Krishna's karmas is that He never sees Himself as the karta. Nor does He accept the fruits of His karmas. One day, Shri Hanuman Prasadji Poddar, Editor of Kalyan, told me, 'You often say, *"Na maam karmaani limpanti na me` karmafale` sprihaa" (4. 14),* but these are Bhagwan's words; they are not the words of a jeeva.' He felt that I was saying this shloka with reference to myself. There is no doubt that these are Bhagwan's words, that if anyone gets the realization that Bhagwan is not the karta or bhokta, he will also be liberated from being the karta or bhokta. *'Iti maam yobhijaanaati karmabhirna sa baddhyate`.'(4. 14)*

Will we become learned by knowing that Shastriji is learned? Will we get renunciation just by knowing that Mahatmaji has renunciation? What is the logic in Shri Krishna's statement? There must be some reason as to why a person who knows that Shri Krishna is the akarta and abhokta also becomes an akarta and abhokta. The Gita is for human beings. It contains repeated statements to give Atmagnan and make humans free of worldly bondage.

See this shloka –

Brahmanyaadhaaya karmaani sangam tyaktvaa karoti yah,

Lipyate` na sa paape`na padmapatramivaambhasaa.

(5. 10)

(A person who offers up all his karmas to the Paramatma, and has no attachment to any of them, stays above paapa, just as a lotus leaf stays above the water.)

The meaning of this is that you should not attach your karmas to yourself. You are not the cause, nor are you the sustainer of your karmas. It is not you who determines whether the karmas will be completed, nor are you the one who gets the fruits.

A gentleman was arranging some books. I told him I was thirsty and asked him to get me some water. 'Yes, Maharaj,' he said. 'I will get it as soon as I have finished arranging the books.' It took him half an hour to arrange the books. I had to bear my thirst till then. On the other hand, a soldier obeys instantly when he is ordered to put down his gun, or fall flat on the ground. This is a good example of the kind of attitude we should have towards our work. There was a retired soldier in Benares. He was walking with an earthen pot. A University student called out, 'Attention!' The man dropped his pot and stood at attention! The work of a soldier is different, but if a person doesn't know what should be given priority, he does not know the science of work.

We have discussed *falaasakti* (attachment to the fruit of karmas) and *karmaasakti* (attachment to karmas) earlier. Karmasakti is meant to help us complete the task with a sincere determination. People say, 'I will ensure that the work is completed.' My brother, it is good to have determination, but you have no control over the various factors that determine how the work progresses, or doesn't.

The third is *kartritvaasakti* – attachment to work. You may not be attached to the fruit of the work or to any particular work, but you are attached to doing some work. The karta dies if there is no karma, so you want to go n doing something.

The fourth is *akartritvaasakti*. The essence of the Atma is not the karta. The feeling of being the karta is superimposed on the Atma. This causes tension and harassment. To remove the agitation, the person is told that he is not the karta; he is the akarta. Then the person gets

attached to the feeling of being the akarta.

In what way do you consider yourself to be the akarta? Do you tell yourself that you are the akarta? If you impose the feeling, 'I am the akarta' on yourself, you are doing the karma of imposing a feeling. It is an inclination of the antahkaran that you hold on to. The feeling contains 'I' as well as 'karta' – the subtle pride of being an individual and being the akarta. This is not a pat of the principle of our Shastras. If you say, 'I am not the karta,' you have to add a negation to your 'I'; and if you say, 'I am an akarta', you have to deny doing the action. However, it is an action to deny something! This is a strange fact.

A person gets paapa if he neglects doing the ritual of the Sandhya Vandan. How can anyone get paapa for the absence of karma? The Shastras have given much thought to this. Not doing the Sandhya Vandan is not merely the absence of action; it is a flouting of an ordained duty. You do the karma of rejecting your duty, and this is why you get paapa.

A man was caught stealing shoes. He was presented before a Magistrate. 'Did you steal the shoes?'

'No, your Honor. I did not steal the shoes.'

'You were caught with the shoes on your feet.'

'My feet stole the shoes. I am not the thief.'

'Very well. You are given the punishment of death by hanging.'

'No! No! How can I be punished if I didn't do anything?'

.My brother, you are not being punished; your neck is being punished.'

'The feet stole the shoes; why should the neck be punished?'

'Very well, your feet will be cut off.'

'No! No!'

'My brother, you didn't commit the theft; your feet stole the shoes, so why do you object to your feet being punished?' This is called making a mockery of *akartaapana* (the feeling of being an akarta). The feeling of being an akarta is also a feeling.

The Sankhya Darshan speaks of the *dosha* (fault) of *akartritvaasakti*

(attachment to being the akarta). *Falaasakti* (attachment to the fruit of the karma) is a desire. Karmasakti is when you consider karma to be very important. Kartritvasakti is *aatmaadhyaasa* (the illusion that the Atma is the karta). And, akartrivasakti is a superimposition for removing the other three.

Now, give some thought to the word '*drashtaa'* – the observer. Drashta means, 'I am only an uninvolved observer; I am not the karta.' How do you experience your *drashtaapana* (being the drashta)? If you imagine that you see yourself as the drashta, you become the *drishya* (that, which is seen, and separate from the one who sees). If you feel, 'I am the drashta', your 'I' gets attached to the drashta. Then, the tiniest object and the drishya get connected.

Give a little thought to this. 'I am the drashta' – what kind of a drashta are you? Are you a drashta through your eyes, or through objects imagined by your antahkaran? If you remain connected to your antahkaran, and you also hold on to the feeling of being a drashta, how can you be the uninvolved observer?

Are you the drashta of the Ishwara, or not? Aren't you also the drashta of the antahkaran that observes everything? This feeling of being the drashta is entangled in so many things. If any other drashta exists, you are not a true drashta, because other drashtas are certainly not a drishya! If you are the drashta of the *prapancha* (interactive world), is it through the antahkaran or without the antahkaran? Are you the drashta of what is imagined by the Ishwara, or the drashta of the Ishwara? This needs to be understood. People who go on doing paapa-punya saying they are not the karta – they are the drashta – do so because of avid desire. A person who has desires is also a karta. He is also a karta when he is against something, and when he asks for something. What then?

'Shruyate`' is a word used in the Vedas. It means to do *shravana* – listen to metaphysical discourses. It is through shravan that we heard that the Rishis saw the Vedas. Now, think about yourself – the Rishis are drashtas who saw the Vedas, and if you are a drashta, do you see the Vedas? If not, why not? Are you a small drashta and the Rishis greater drashtas? If there was no connection between the drashta and drishya, nobody could be a small or great drashta. Smallness is drishya, it is a perception; and so is greatness. The Ishwara sees the *srishti* (created world) and so do you, but He sees the whole world, and you see your little world. Why is that? What made the drashta become great or small? The Rishis were greater drashtas than you, and the Ishwara is a greater drashta than the Rishis.

Think of this – if the Rishis see the Vedas, will the Vedas be the drashta or will it be drishya? The Vedas would be transient if it was drishya. So we have to accept that the Vedas are the Atma of the Rishi who is the drashta. Only then can the Vedas be eternal. That means, we are the drashta of the Vedas that are composed of mantras and brahmanas. The Atma of the Rishis is not separate from our Atma. We, the drashta in the form of a jeeva, are not separate from the Ishwara who sees the whole world in its totality. This is why the Gita's description of *saadhan* (effort for spiritual progress) should not be taken as a principle.

Now, see what the Gita's principle is. Where is the Atma? Is the Atma in the body or is the body in the Atma? If the Atma is in the body, then it would be some matter placed in the vessel of the body. If the body is in the Atma, where is it placed in the infinity of the Atma? The Atma is infinite, and it is non-dual. Where can the body be found in it? And, if the body is in the Atma, how can it be located in this infinity that is the non-dual essence and substratum of everything?

Pay attention to Shri Krishna's words if you want to understand the Atma. He says, '*Matsthaani sarvabhootaani (9. 4)* – all beings are in Me.' And He also says immediately, *'Na cha matsthaani bhootaani (9.5)* – nothing is in Me'. Elsewhere He says, *'Yo maam pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati (6. 30)* – he, who sees Me in all, always sees Me.' All are in the Atma, and the Atma is in all. *'Sarvabhoote`shu cha'* and, *'sarvabhootaani cha aatmani (6. 29).'* The characteristics of Bhagwan and the Atma are the same.

Thus, see the principle of the Gita –

Sarvabhootasthitam yo maam bhajatye`katvamaasthithah,

Sarvathaa vartamaanopi sa yogee mayi vartate`.

(6. 31)

(The Yogi who is established in this feeling, that I am in all beings as their Atma, and worships Me, moves in Me, no matter where he goes.)

The Atma and Paramatma are one. The *jagat* (world) is in the Atma, and the Atma is in the jagat; the jagat is in the Paramatma, and the Paramatma is in the jagat. When the principle of the Atma and

Paramatma being one is seen, the jagat disappears.

The conclusion is –

Mattah parataran naanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya,

Mayi sarvamidam protam sutre` maniganaa iva.

(7. 7)

(O Dhananjaya! There is no other supreme cause, apart from Me. This whole world is linked together like balls of thread on a string of thread.)

The first thing is, don't be idle. The second is, do good deeds and don't do anything that is wrong. The third thing is, don't let your good deeds be *sakaama* (motivated by worldly desires). The fourth point is, don't be the karta of even *nishkaama* (free of worldly desires) actions. And the fifth point is, don't let *jadataa* (lack of consciousness) overcome your akartapana.

Do you see this world the way the Ishwara sees it, or not? If you see things differently, then, either you or the Ishwara lacks proper understanding. I speak as a fakir (mystic), not as a *majhabi* (belonging to a religious Sect). When your viewpoint is one with the Ishwara's, all differences disappear. So, try to see things as He sees them. You can never be happy if you have a difference of opinion with Him. A person who has no difference of opinion with Bhagwan is called a fakir. The Ishwara sees all beings as His essence. When your viewpoint matches His, you will see nothing but Him.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.

Pravachan VI

Shri Madhusudan Saraswati is one of the most famous scholars of Vedanta. He was sitting alone in his hut one day, when an *avadhoota* (wandering mendicant) came to him. The Sadhu's body was covered with dust. 'Swamiji,' he said, 'When you are confronted with a powerful opponent in a debate on the Shastras, do you fear afraid that you will lose the argument? Is there tension on your face at that time?'

'Yes,' admitted Shri Madhusudan Saraswati. 'I do worry about which argument I should use, to win the debate. I do fear defeat.'

'In that case, your *de`haadhyaasa* (identification with the body) still remains,' said the avadhoot. 'Your 'I' is placed in your body. However, your feeling that you are your body is a false impression.'

The word *'adhyaasa'* (superimposition) belongs particularly to Vedanta. It is not easily understood by those who are not familiar with the term. When a book of Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj was published, I gave a copy to a gentleman who lived in Jabalpur. He was an M.A. and he went regularly to Satsang (spiritual discourses). He went through the book and scratched out the word 'adhyasa', replacing it with *'abhyaasa'* (practice or habit). Adhyasa means, to mistake something for something else; to put a covering over the truth. For example, it is an adhyasa if you think that a woman in a red sari is a Sadhu, or that the *de`ha* (body) is the Atma. Adhyasa is to superimpose something on something else. This is done because of foolishness or ignorance.

The avadhoot said, 'Swamiji, you are a learned Pundit of Vedanta. You call yourself the *shuddha-buddha-mukta* (pure-enlightened-liberated) Brahman; yet you believe yourself to be the body, and feel afraid. It is clear that your adhyasa is not destroyed. You are still frolicking in dust.'

This made a deep impression on Shri Madhusudan Saraswati. 'What should I do?' he asked. The avadhoot told him to do Bhagwan's bhajan. After that, Swamiji went away from his home. He stopped at Panchakosha, where wandering Sadhus rest on the fourth day of their journey, and began to do the *japa* (ritual chanting) of the mantra given by the avadhoot. He completed the stipulated amount of japa – not once, but four times – with no result. He got irritated. 'Where is the lofty principle of Advaita (non-dualism), and where is this childish game of chanting?' he thought. 'What have I got trapped into?' He was about to set off to go back, when a low caste man came and stood before him. 'Swamiji,' said the man, 'You got fed up so easily? Do the japa one more time. You will be successful.'

Swamiji was amazed. 'How do you know about my japa?' he asked.

'I have a nominal *shakti* (power) that enables me to know what is in the mind of the person before me,' explained the man.

'Show me this *siddhi* (supernatural power),' said Swamiji. The man summoned the shakti. The shakti said, 'Swamiji is so lustrous that I begin to burn if I go before him. Tell him to do the anushthana once more.' Then Swamiji did the japa once more and had a darshan of Shri Krishna.

He cried out,

'Vansheevibhooshitakaraannavaneeradaabhaata……..

Pitaambaraadhanabimbafalaadharoshthaat,

Poornendusundaramukhaataravinda ne`traat,

Krishnaatparam kimapi tattvamaham na jaane`.'

Shri Madhusudan Saraswati has written many other shlokas which are given in the 'Bhakti Rasayana'. After that, his dehadhyasa was completely destroyed. Among all the Vedantis, Shri Madhusudan Saraswati is the most loving in his devotion.

When fear comes into our life it is a sign that there is some fault in our life. It indicates that we have not yet attained the first step of the *daivee sampadaa* (divine qualities), which is *abhay* (fearlessness). *'Abhayam sattvasanshuddhirgnaanayogavyavasthitah (16. 1)'*. That means, complete fearlessness, a limpid antahkaran, and constant meditating on the Tattva (essence), are essential for obtaining Gnan. When sadhana comes into a person's life, he becomes fearless.

Three things are required for obtaining the Gnan of Vedanta. One is *'Abhayam pratishthaam vindate`'* – do all your work, go into a forest, enter a Samadhi, or go to war – but the natural fearlessness of the Atma should remain. Another sign of being free of adhyasa is the ability to give up. There is an internal condition of *tyaaga* (renunciation) in us. There is nothing in this visible world in which we interact and enjoy, or in the next world, that we can't give up. A person who is the akarta is also the abhokta.

The third point is to know the *drishya* (that, which is seen, and is separate from our 'I') to be absent, in the sense that it is not the Satya (irrefutable existence). A person who realizes this loses interest in the interactive world. He obtains enlightenment; the Gnan about all things. For him, nothing remains to be done or gained, nothing to be given or known. Gnan is accompanied by three main things – *nirbhayataa* (absence of fear), the capacity for tyaaga, and Gnan about all things through the Gnan about the one Gnan (the non-dual essence of the Atma). This is the principle of the Upanishads.

Thus, the first point is that if you have faith in Bhagwan, you should not feel afraid. If you believe that everything is done by Prakriti, you should not feel afraid, because nature will take its natural course. If the karmas are done by the substratum that becomes the multiple causes of karma, and the Divine Drashta does everything, you should be free of fear. You should bring *nirdvandataa* (lack of duality; absence of doubts) into your life. Whether you walk on the right or on the left, He is there. He is in front of you and He is behind you. He is present in whichever state you are in, so you have no reason to be afraid.

The second point is that when *nirbhayataa* (fearlessness) comes into your life, *nirdoshataa* (guiltlessness) accompanies it. It is natural to hate someone you fear. When a person realizes that he is not the karta, he is an uninvolved observer, a *drashtaa*, a *saakshee.* Whether it is through intellectual understanding that everything is Him, or whether it is through bhakti, or through Vedanta, once you realize that the Atma is the Brahman, you will feel no hatred for any object, person, action, feeling or object.

When our heart burns at the sight of a person, object, or incident, the feeling that causes the hatred or anger is called *'adhyaasa'* (a superimposition on our natural state of tranquility). To say that it is an adhyasa means that at that time, we do not see ourselves as the akarta. In spite of being the akarta, we don't have the feeling of being an akarta. *'Vasudhaiva kutumbakam'* – everything in Creation is the family of Vasudev, Shri Krishna. There is no difference between those

who worship Shiva and those who worship Vishnu. The fair-hued Shiva and dark-hued Vishnu are one. People of different countries are like different cells in our body. It is when we feel an aversion for any that we become a karta, bhokta, and *parichhinna* (separate). Hatred is created when we get attached to a particular preference about how things should, or should not be. Preference leads to divisions, and when we merge with any division, we develop strong likes and dislikes.

Now, let us consider who or what we hate. We develop aversion for that, which hurts us and what we fear. We develop affection for whoever removes the cause of our fear, and provides solace. This is why it is essential to develop a state of mind that is free of *raaga-dve`sha* (attachment-aversion). A feeling of unbroken continuity can be developed by the thought that everything is Bhagwan. To achieve this, it is vital to fulfill our individual duties. How can a person who does not behave in the right way with his parents, spouse and children behave properly with the rest of the world?

Sadhana begins with the effort to avoid hurting anyone, and remaining free of fear. We can be free of hatred only if we are free of fear. Anger and the urge for violence come because of dvesha. Dvesha creates a burning in our heart, and the heat of the fire of hatred makes us merge into something. Don't try to reach the sky in one leap. Start climbing from where you are. Sadhana starts with tolerance in our home, then with neighbors, and then with all humanity. You will never reach your goal if you start fighting with all that is unfavorable in life. When you feel angry, remember that you are playing with fire. When you feel greedy, you are in danger of being swept away in its tide, and when you feel lust, you are in danger of being carried away by a whirlwind.

A person who is the akarta and abhokta does not burn with hatred, get swept off his feet by greed, or carried away by lust. He sits established in his own stature. If you have an aversion for someone, you are bound to have affection for someone else, and vice versa. Nobody can keep their feeling concealed for long. Their eyes reveal who they love and who they hate. The body emits subtle vibrations that make a person say or do things that expose his feelings and state of mind. Those who want to walk on the path of Paramartha (the supreme achievement) should understand the condition of their subtle body, otherwise they will see only the flaws and faults in the world.

The responsibility of improving people lies with the political and religious leaders, but the responsibility of becoming more and more

tolerant rests on ourselves. We must be more forgiving. Don't point out the faults in others – see whether you have faults or not. Self-examination is vital. It is only when you see yourself clearly that you can know where your *asmitaa* (pride) is hidden. 'Asmi' means 'I' and 'asti' means 'is'. You have to see where your 'I' is placed.

There was a Mahatma at Vrindavan. He used to tell us, 'When a person starts speaking, I can tell where he is speaking from, whether he speaks from the home of a friend, an enemy, a gambling den, or a bar.' Nobody can hide themselves for long. People's thoughts and feelings cling to their words and reveal themselves involuntarily.

So, examine yourself, and see where your asmita is. If you realize that there is something called the Atma, that is separate from your body, and that it is your subtle body that gets paapa-punya and goes to Swarga-Narak, you have got the motivation for improving yourself. The Atma is not only in your body, it is also beyond your body; but knowing this is not enough to give you mukti.

You see that there is a great deal of disturbance outside, so you shut your door and windows and sit in peace. That is fine, but you have not been liberated from your fear. To be free of fear you have to destroy adhyasa. Adhyasa means the mistake that convinces you that you are a form that is separate from the Paramatma. You can call yourself an akarta and abhokta, and drashta, without being unattached to your physical form. If a drop of water tries to establish its existence as separate from the ocean, it will only go towards its death. We would die if our breath wanted to severe its connection to the air outside. Just as our body needs nourishment, our eyes need the sun, our breath needs air, and our nose and mouth needs space, our consciousness needs the infinite consciousness.

Therefore, death will not liberate you unless and until your life gets connected to the Paramatma. Whoever is separated from the Paramatma is in the jaws of death, and whoever is united with Him is freed of fear, aversions, attachments, and agnan. A man cannot live happily if he is separated from society. A village cannot flourish if cut off from the country, and a religious sect cannot exist if cut off from Dharma (eternal righteousness). Similarly, this jeeva loses his life if he is separated from the Paramatma.

So, stay with Him who is in all. For this, it is necessary to do some dhyana and some sadhana. Sadhana is not done by a display of interest, personal greatness, or hypocrisy. Beautify your life. Remove the faults and wrong tendencies. Don't bother about how others see

you; take an honest look at yourself, and discard everything that seems wrong or leading to sorrow.

There are four ways of doing dhyana. One is to use only words. For example, 'O……..um; Ra……..am' etc. The mind gets focused when you lengthen Bhagwan's name. Nothing remains in the mind except the word, and you remain as the drashta of the word.

The second method is to see the drishya – the world as a picture. You are the observer of the past, present and future. You remain a *saakshee* (uninvolved witness).

The third way is when a bhakta chants the name of Bhagwan, looking at his image. The fourth way is when a bhakta chants Bhagwan's name and sees His image, with or without a picture or idol. *E`kaagrataa* (single pointed focus) is thus achieved in these four ways. The technical terms for these are *shabdaanuviddha, drishyaanuviddha, ubhayaanuviddha,* and *anubhayaanuviddha dhyaaana.*

Don't become self-satisfied by telling yourself about the good qualities you have; use them in your daily life. You have become habituated to this *sansaara* (interactive world). Money has become so important that people are prepared to give up their integrity for it. The family becomes so important that we want to feed our family even if it means many others going hungry. The physical form has become so important that we want it to remain young and beautiful, no matter what the cost. Selfishness has been developed over many lifetimes; it cannot be broken without sadhana. You have to make an effort for spiritual progress, and offer loving worship to Bhagwan. Sadhana, however, affects different people in different ways.

It is like two boys playing in the sun. One has no adverse affect, but the other gets a sunstroke. Why is that? It is because their bodies react differently to heat. Similarly, the effect of sadhana is faster in some and slower for some. There are times when the sadhana has no effect on a person, and there are people who have a bright personality even before they start doing sadhana. The Sadguru (Guru established in the Sat) sees whether a disciple has done any sadhana in his previous birth and what his present state is, and guides the disciple accordingly.

Do you indeed have a desire to know the Satya (pure existence, ultimate reality)? If so, why do you wish to get the satisfaction of destroying your enemy, and doing everything possible to please the one you love? Why do you fear unfavorable circumstances? What you

want is to become great while holding on to your tiny 'I'. You are living in utter darkness. You don't know where your next step will take you. That is why a human being needs a Sadguru who has universal vision, can gauge his past and future lives, and what he is capable of. We need a Sadguru to tell us the right sadhana, and we need to do the sadhana with all sincerity.

First let *nishkaamataa* (a state of having no worldly desires) and *akartaapana* (the feeling of not being the doer) come into your life. Akartapana can also turn into *jadataa* (a state of stupor). The extreme state of lacking animation is to do nothing. If the jada (inanimate) objects have the power to develop consciousness – as believed by our learned people, who say that Creation occurs in the *drishti* (vision) – how can the inanimate be considered totally *ache`tan* (lacking in consciousness)? If the *che`tan* (consciousness) has the ability to become everything, how can it be called only the chetan? The Sat (pure existence), from which chetan is created, cannot be said to be only jada. It is very difficult to discriminate between the jada and the chetan. This is why we don't want only Sat, we also want chetan. We don't want only the akarta who has no pride of being the doer, we also want the teaching that the Gita gives.

Upadrashtaanumantaa cha bhartaa bhoktaa mahe`shvarah,

Paramaatme`ti chaapyukto de`he`sminpurushah parah.

(13. 22)

(This Atma, placed in the body, is actually the Paramatma. It is close to the drashta, because He is the sakshee. He gives His silent consent to what we do, hence, He is also the *anumantaa* (consenter). He is the *bhartaa* (sustainer) because He sustains all beings; the bhokta in the form of the jeeva, and the Paramatma because He is also pure existence, consciousness and bliss – the Sacchidananda.)

We don't want only the akarta; we also want the *upadrashtaa* (the one who sits close to the drashta). And, where do we want Him? *'De`he`smin purushah parah'* – we want the Purushottam who hidden in the subtle pride of individuality. The fact is that this upadrashta is a form of the Purushottam. He is the most superior, the essence of our 'I', the one who reveals our 'I' to us, and is the substratum of our 'I'. It is He who reveals the Ishwara, jeeva, and jagat (interactive world).

Let us take another look at '*Gunaa gune`shuvartante` iti mattvaa no sajjate`'* (the gunas move among their objects – I do nothing). We have lost our *asangataa* (state of being unattached) in the dust bin of the external world, in money, and so many other petty things. How do people lose themselves?

There was a Mahatma who lived at Ayodhya. He was highly elevated spiritually. He had told his disciples that an air plane would come for him when he was about to die, and that bells would ring when he died. He died a few days later, but no air plane came and no bells rang. The disciples said, 'Our Guru's words cannot be false. There must be some reason for the absence of air plane and bells.' They asked another elevated Mahatma to come and solve the mystery. The Mahatma came and began to think about the matter. He saw a *be`r* (berry) tree laden with lush fruits. Ber is forbidden for earnest sadhakas. The Mahatma told the disciples to break and crush one fruit. There was a worm inside that also got crushed. At once bells started ringing and an air plane arrived to take the Mahatma to Bhagwan's land. At the moment of death, the Mahatma had felt an urge to eat ber and the result was that he had to become a worm to satisfy his desire. Desires block liberation.

You will not succeed, if you try to find the truth of this story. Its purpose is to show you where you get scattered. We have to gather ourselves from the external world and also in this body of ours. We have to contract our 'I' until it becomes so subtle that we slip out of it, and spread all over space. This is the essence of sadhana.

I have seen death; not once, but three times, but I have not died. The fact is that none of us have ever died. How can anyone say, 'I have died'? Had you really died, how could you be here today? Your living presence is proof that you have not died. What happens is that a physical cover of our 'I' is torn and burnt, and people say we have died. People become one with the disposable cover of their 'I' and merge into the external world. We have to separate our 'I' from our body and the world the body lives in. This is sadhana.

All that is experienced through your senses is called the *'drishya'* (that, which is seen). The senses through which you experience things are called the *'drishti'* (vision). When you progress, the senses become the drishya and the mind becomes the *drashtaa* (the one who sees). Go deeper, and even deeper within, till you reach the mind. You come to know whether your mind is restless or steady, whether it contains lust, greed, or anger, whether it is in its own home or elsewhere. The mind is like a restless child. Observe it and see where it plays. A person who

has not seen his mind has seen nothing.

There is something that sees the *mana* (mind), but cannot be seen. What is that? That is you, your Self. Your height and weight can be seen, but your Self cannot be seen. Today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow can be seen, but you Self cannot be seen. This essence, which is you, is wonderful! Come to this and say, *'Gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti mattva na sajjate`'*. True asangata is achieved when you reach this state and separate your Self from all that surrounds you.

Merge your 'I' into its essence, into its effulgence, and then see that the world is being created, sustained and destroyed. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh are being created and destroyed, but you don't die. This is *aatma-saakshaatkaara* – the direct experience of the Atma. Unless you make an effort to break free of what you are caught in, how can you get Atma sakshatkara? *'Naayamaatmaa balaheene`na labhyah'* (this Atma cannot be attained by the weak).

There was a Mahatma who saw a talking parrot. The parrot understood what the Mahatma said. It sat on a lotus that was caught in a whirlpool. The parrot began to chirp with fear. 'O, let go!' said the Mahatma. 'Oh, let go,' repeated the parrot, but it would not let go. The meaning of this story is that if you let go of all that you feel attached to, you will realize that you are one with the unattached Brahman. Neither the Brahman nor the Paramatma are separate from you. This is called *'gunaa gune`shu vartante` iti mattvaa na sajjate`.'*

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Pravachan VII

The meaning of ‘guna’, in *‘gunaa gune`shu vartatante``’* has already been clarified several times. The objects of the senses, like sound, flavor, small, feel, and sight, are called ‘gunas’, and so is the Gnan about them. The senses that absorb them are also called the gunas and so is the Gnan about them. The *antahkaran* (fourfold mind) is also a *kaarya* (action) of the gunas. The three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep are gunas, too. Prakriti itself contains the gunas, and is, therefore, a form of the gunas. *‘Gunaa gune`shu vartante``’* means that all interaction staring from Prakriti to the objects of the gunas, happens within Prakriti. It is the action of Prakriti. Our Atmadev, on the other hand, is in no way connected to Prakriti, even though the Atma is in the body.

According to the Gita, the form of the Atma is:

Anaaditvaannirgunatvaatparamaatmaayamavyayah,

Shareerasthopi kaunte`ya na karoti na lipyate`.

(13. 31)

(O Arjuna! The Paramatma is eternal and free of gunas. Therefore, He neither does anything nor gets attached to anything, even though He abides in the body.)

Prakriti is *anaadi* (without beginning; eternal), and so are the Atma and the Paramatma. Prakriti however, contains, the three gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, while the Paramatma is *nirguna* (free of gunas).

But where is the Paramatma? Shri Krishna says, *'Shareerasthopi kaunte`ya'*. It seems He places His hand on His chest as He says this. The supreme form of the Atma is called the Paramatma. Just as jaggery is sweet because of the sweetness in the sugar cane, the Paramatma is *avyayah* (endless) even when He is in the body. The gunas are temporary. They keep changing. Tamoguna (delusion and sloth) comes after Rajoguna (activity and agitation) is exhausted, and Rajoguna comes when Tamoguna is exhausted. At times, both are used up and Sattvaguna (peace and wisdom) predominates. Thus, they fluctuate, one at a time. Unlike the gunas, the essence of the Paramatma does not change. That Param Purusha abides in the body, but is nirguna, and indestructible. Similarly, the essence of the Atma is also beyond the three gunas.

So, if we work while we are still tied to the gunas, we will have the pride of doing things, and get paapa-punya. If we give up work, we will have the pride of not working. We will be guilty of neglecting to do our duty. The pride of our actions will continue to increase, whether our deeds are good or bad.

The actions are done by the gunas of Prakriti. They have no connection with our Atma. Just as day and night come by themselves – we don't call them – everything is done by itself. We are not the karta of inviting the gunas, nor are we connected to them in any way. Yet, we have become connected to them. Guna means bonds, a chain that ties you to this interactive world.

What is the method by which we can free ourselves from the bondage of the gunas, sense objects, senses, mental inclinations, sleep, Samadhi, etc? And, what are the characteristics of a person who has freed himself of them?

Yadaa bhootaprithagbhaavame`kasthamanupashyati,

Tata e`va cha vistaaram brahma sampadyate` tadaa.

(13. 30)

(The minute a person sees that all beings are in the Paramatma, and all emerge from Him, he obtains the Sacchidananda Brahman.)

The expansion of all from the one, and the dissolving of all into the one – a person becomes a form of the Brahman when he perceives this.

Idam gnaanamupaashritya mama saadharmyamaagataah,

Sarve`pi nopajaayante` pralaye` na vyathanti cha.

(14. 2)

(A person who obtains this Gnan obtains Me. He is not reborn; nor does he suffer during Dissolution.)

Birth and death have no meaning for a person who has obtained this knowledge. Neither is he born during Creation, nor does he die during Dissolution. The actions of the gunas are described in detail in the fourteenth chapter. The gunas are the cause of a person's elevation and also of his downfall. It is the gunas that induce sleep, lethargy, forgetfulness, delusion, joy, and sorrow. It is a piece of great good fortune if a person succeeds in severing his connection with the gunas.

The Gita gives us two clear methods for this.

Naanyam gune`bhyah kartaaram yadaa drashtaanupashyati,

Gune`bhyashcha param ve`tti madbhaavam sodhigachhati.

(14. 19)

(When a person realizes that there is no other karta apart from the three gunas, and knows Me, the Sacchidananda Paramatma, to be beyond the gunas, he attains My essence.)

How is this Atma the Paramatma? When a person sees that the gunas are the actual karta, that Atma is experienced as being one with the Paramatma. Prakriti and Prakriti's creations are controlled by Prakriti's gunas, which are in no way connected to the Atma. A person who knows himself to be unconnected to the senses, objects of the senses, the antahkaran, and the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, experiences the feeling of the Paramatma.

The three gunas stay in the gross physical body. The person who lets go of all three gunas is freed of all bonds; he is liberated. He realizes his pristine, enlightened and liberated essence. He knows that he is actually the drashta, and becomes one with the Paramatma – *'madbhaavam sodhigachhati'*. This is one way of using discrimination to separate our Self from the outside world and be free of its bondage.

When I was young, I had a thought that even though my eye sees so many things – both beautiful and ugly – it doesn't get stuck to anything. The eye got the Gnan of things pleasant and unpleasant, but that did not blind my eye or get attached to it. To say that someone has come into your eyes is quite ridiculous! An Arya Samaji gentleman told me, 'Won't the eye burst if a human being gets into it?' He was quite right! The mind thinks about someone for a while. Someone abused me and someone praised me. The abuse did not make me deaf and the praise did not pull me towards the person. It is the nature of Gnan to see the objects of the senses, but not go anywhere. Similarly, any number of loved ones came into the antahkaran and left it. We don't even remember the people we were once so fond of.

A few days back I had gone to Benaras. A Muslim gentleman came to meet me. I failed to recognize him. 'We were classmates at Primary school,' he reminded me. 'We were close friends.' I had to strain my memory to remember. Thus friendships also fade away. Nothing is retained in our memory. New things come and go. To get attached is not the nature of Gnan. The tongue says and tastes so many things, but there is no satisfaction. No matter how much you hear, see, or love, everything is forgotten when you fall asleep. Gnan is the essence of the Atma. There is no scope for *aasakti* (attachment) in Gnan. There is nothing in this world that we can't give up. We should have no asakti for even our own body. We should be prepared to give it up any time. What was the state of mind of the patriots who were given death sentences? They wanted to die and be reborn in the service of their motherland.

A Badshah fell in love with a woman and gave up his Kingdom to marry her, but did that love last all his life? This world keeps changing, like the sun and the moon, day and night, the ebb and flow of tides. There is no need to get attached to anything. It is a false belief that we have got tied to someone. Let go of these gunas, rise above them. You are *gnaanasvaroopa* (the essence of Gnan), absolutely unswerving. Use discrimination to separate your Self from the objects of the senses, the senses, mental inclinations, pride, and the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. You will see that you are established in your own status, lustrous, and unchanging, while the world keeps changing.

One Mahatma told me that I should sit by the river regularly. 'What happens if we sit by the river regularly?' I asked. 'You remain unmoving, and see the water flow on. Prakriti flows, just like the water,' he explained.

One method is to not consider yourself only the drashta. Use discrimination to understand the drashta. Then, you will not be bound by anything on this earth.

Now, see another method –

Maam cha yovyabhichaare`na bhakiyoge`na se`vate`,

Sa gunaansamateetyaitaanbrahmabhooyaaya kalpate`.

(14. 26)

(When a person offers Me loving worship, surrendering to Me completely, he crosses over the three gunas and becomes eligible to obtain the Sacchidananda Brahman.)

Use Bhakti Yoga – yoke yourself to Bhagwan with a single pointed bhakti. Do His bhajan, offer Him loving worship, and serve Him. Surrender at His feet and get attached to Him, who is beyond the three gunas. These, the gunas, senses, sense objects, and antahkaran will stay in their own places while you sit holding Bhagwan's lotus-feet. The *ne`ti-ne`ti* (not this, not this) practiced these days is not the method for becoming *gunaateeta* (beyond the three gunas). Bhagwan has said in the Gita, 'When My devotee obtains Gnan about Me he becomes one with Me.'

There are thus two methods for remaining detached inwardly while interacting in this world. One is to discriminate between the Atma and *anaatmaa* (that, which is not the Atma). The other is bhakti. *Pre`ma* (pure love) is possible for only one, so when you have complete love for Bhagwan, there will be no reason for you to be tied to anything in this interactive world.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna told Arjuna that it was a Kshatriya's principle Dharma to fight. 'So, think of Me and fight. *Svadharme` nidhanam shre`yah paradharmo bhayaavahah (3. 35)* – it is better to die doing your Dharma, but fearsome to follow the Dharma of another.'

Bhagwan gave many arguments to convince Arjuna. He said that the Ishwara does everything and is everything, but Arjuna was not convinced. Then Shri Krishna asked Arjuna to come nearer. 'You sit as the *rathee* (charioteer), believing Me to be the *saarathee* (driver). You refuse to accept My reasoning. Come closer, I will whisper a mantra in your ear.'

In earlier times, when a boy was initiated into the Gayatri Mantra at the time of received his *yagyopaveeta* (sacred thread), the custom was that the Brahmin put a sheet over their heads and whispered the mantra into the boy's ear. 'I will tell you the greatest of all secrets,' said Shri Krishna. 'This is the method by which you and I – the jeeva and the Ishwara, the *nara* (human) and Narayana, the Atma and the Paramatma – become one. The secret is, *sarvadharmaan parityajya maame`kam sharanam vraja (18. 66)*. Give up all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone.'

Arjuna was afraid of the consequences of giving up Dharma and taking refuge in Shri Krishna. Shri Krishna explained that *svadharma* (our ordained Dharma) is in Prakriti and in the gunas of Prakriti. It is natural, and inbuilt in our nature. At most, you can say that it belongs to the Ishwara, but it is secondary, not the principal factor. The principal factor is our Atma. The karmas of the gunas are *gauna* (secondary). Your body is in your life, but it is less important. Prakriti is also less important than the Atma. 'So, give them all up.'

Who is all this meant for? Who is the main person? I had gone to meet a Mahatma at Rishikesh. He had written a shloka on the wall of his hut, that appealed to me greatly. I quote it quite often. *'Sarvadharmaparityaagee sarvapaapaih pramuchyate`*. I have read the whole Gita and come to the conclusion that a person who gives up all Dharmas becomes free of all paapas.' I asked the Mahatma why he had written such a controversial statement on his wall. 'When you

give up the ideas imposed by majhabs (religious Sects), your sins will be given up simultaneously. The organized religions are far removed from the frolic of Bhagwan and the essence of the Atma. The Dharma (eternal righteousness) that sustains all Creation is far above the groups of religious Sects. That, which remains one, in spite of all the groups, is called Dharma.'

Shri Krishna also told Arjuna to give up adherence to Sectarianism. People fear that if they give up the constraints of organized religion, they will incur sin, but Shri Krishna told Arjuna to give up the narrow confines of dogma. He said that He would take the responsibility for Arjuna's liberation.

Aham tvaa sarvapaape`bhyo mokshiyishyaami maa shuchah (18. 66)

(I will liberate you from all sin, don't grieve.)

'I will liberate you from all paapas. Give up the gunas, including Sattvaguna. Sattvaguna binds you to peace and happiness. *Maame`kam sharanam vraja* – take refuge in Me alone. Have faith in What I say. Don't look at the sansara, jeevatma, or Prakriti – see only Me. I am the Paramatma. It is a great secret that I am revealing to you for your benefit. Arjuna, you have got *sammoha* (deluded) regarding karma.'

We have become deluded because of our agnan. The work is done by Prakriti and we believe it to be our work. When I was about sixteen years old I used to visit a Mahatma, who was highly respected as a liberated soul. He was ninety years old, but we youngsters found it difficult to keep up with him when he started running! We would rub sand on his body, and his skin shone like a mirror. One day I told him, 'Baba, please place me in Bhagwan's *sharan* (refuge).' A Guru gives his disciple to Bhagwan as a father gives his daughter's hand in marriage to her husband.

'Come to me tomorrow,' he said. 'Think well about what there is in this world, that is not in Bhagwan's sharan. I will place in His sharan whatever you perceive to be out of it.'

I went home and pondered over this. Everything I could think of – the five elements, Prakriti, and Prakriti's gunas – were in Bhagwan's sharan. Then I realized that when all these were in His sharan, surely

my three and a half arm-length body was also in His sharan. So were my mind and my tiny jeeva, which is a part of Him.

The next day I went to Mahatmaji and confessed that I could think of nothing that was not in Bhagwan's sharan. 'Look,' he said, 'it is an illusion when people feel that they are not in Bhagwan's sharan. It is a false impression due to the agnan of the jeeva, that makes a person feel that he is separated from Bhagwan. Look towards Bhagwan. You will see that every cell and follicle of your body, every moment of your life, every being in this world, and every mind that exists is in His sharan. There is nothing that is not controlled by Him.'

Our *kartrittva* (feeling of being the karta) and *bhoktrittva* (feeling of being the one who feels joy and sorrow) have no value in the form of the Paramatma. They have no existence and no importance. The Gita gives us two methods for remaining unattached while interacting in the world. One method is to credit all his actions to the gunas, so that they become secondary. The main person is the drashta. To whom would Bhagwan Shri Krishna or Shri Rama give darshan, if we did not exist? For whom would Prakriti dance? For whom would this physical form of ours be made? Therefore, all these are *gauna* (unimportant), while the Atmadev is of primary importance. We live our daily lives, but we are neither the karta nor the bhokta. *'Na karoti na lipyate`* - the Atma neither does anything, nor does it get smeared by the actions of the body and mind.'

What are the characteristics of a *gunaateeta* (one who has risen above the gunas)?

The Gita describes them.

Prakaasham cha pravrittim cha mohame`va cha paandava,

Na dve`shti samprivritaani na nivrittaani kaankshati.

Udaaseenavadaaseeno gunairyo na vichaalyate`,

Gunaa vartanta itye`va yovatishthati ne`ngate`.

Samadukhasukhah svasthah samaloshtaashmakaanchanah,

Tulyapriyaapriyo dheerastulyanindaatmasanstutih.

(14. 22 – 24)

(O Arjuna, a person who neither hates the brightness, agitation and delusion caused by Sattvaguna, Rajoguna and Tamoguna, nor regrets their leaving; who remains unaffected like an uninvolved witness, knowing that the gunas move among their objects, and remains focused on the Sacchidananda Paramatma, never falls from his position. He is always established in his Atma. He is equally tranquil in joy and sorrow, equally indifferent to a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold, to a Gnani and to pleasant and unpleasant things. He remains unmoved by praise and criticism.)

If a man is sitting on top of a hill and sees elephants in the valley below, how will the elephants appear to him? They will look like sheep. When we sit close to the Paramatma and see the world as He sees it, everything will seem insignificant. Waves of Sattva, Raja and Tama alternate, because they are the natural movements of the gunas. They don't disrupt our natural inner peace. Children play, water flows, sparks fly out of burning logs – all these happen naturally. There is no enmity when you play a friendly game. Life is also a game, a leela, a frolic, a *khe`l*. There is no paapa and punya attached to a game, no feeling of being the karta and bhokta. The actions of a game don't make us sinners or pious people. No one is smaller or greater, and there is no desire for any fruit. A game of make-believe is called a leela. Ripples of sukha alternate with ripples of dukha, but we remain ourselves.

So many sorrows and so many joys came into our life and went away. We don't even remember them now. Nothing is static. Today will be gone, with all its comforts and hardships. So, remain established in your essence. *'Samaloshtaashmakaanchanah'* – you can't eat earth, a stone, or a piece of gold; it is only the vanity of possession. People get huge diamonds, and then what happens? Some others get them, and some feel the sorrow of losing them. Some people come to make you laugh and some come to make you cry. Laughter and tears flow away in the stream of time.

In life, an enemy will come one day and a friend will come one day. You face favorable circumstances and unfavorable circumstances. It is foolish to expect things to be favorable all the time. Are you the Ishwara that you can always get what you want? The Ishwara also has a mind, and does what He wants. When you want things to happen to your liking always, you sow the seeds of unhappiness.

So, don't differentiate between what you like and what you dislike.

Consider them to be equal – *'tulyapriyaa priyo dheerah (14. 24)'*. Fold your hands and welcome your enemy if he pays you a visit. He may not be dear to you today, but a day will come when he is very dear. The person you like today will be disliked tomorrow. There is nothing in this world that you will always like or dislike. The world keeps changing. The praise and criticism of people will vanish in the air – *'tulyanindaatmasanstutih (14. 24)'*.

These are the characteristic of a gunaateeta. He, too, has periods of brightness and activity, '*prakaasham cha pravrittim cha (14. 22)'*, and periods of darkness as well. Little children fear the darkness, bright light, and hard work. You have understanding; why do you want that things should be only to your liking? Do everything with the feeling that your Atmadev is not separate from the Paramatma who is eternal. Remain free of fear and doubts. Everything is Bhagwan's leela. Nothing exists, except Him.

You are familiar with Bhagwan's pledge –

Yo maam pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati,

Tasyaaham na pranashyaami sa cha me` na pranashyati.

(16. 30)

(The person who sees Me, Vasudeva, as the Atma of all beings, and sees everything in Me, always sees Me. For such a person, I am never out of sight.)

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih.